

ゼロの使い魔

六千年の真実
ヤマグチノボル

21



Novel Illustrations

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〈六千年の真実〉

ヤマグチノボル

21





「では行こう、
サイト君とティファニア嬢を救うために」
「ルヘルが杖を真上に掲げて言った。
全員、無言で杖の先を合わせると、
塔の中に突入した。」
第二章 アディール特攻！

「テファ、大丈夫か」

「うん、サイトがいてくれるもの」
水に濡れたエルフの服が、
やわらかそうな肢体に、
ぴったりとはりついている。

—第五章 脱出—





「挟むんです。それでもって、洗うんです」

「洗う？」

シエスタはまた、耳もとでこによこによした。
ようやく、その意味を理解したルイズは、
たちまち真っ赤になった。

「は、ばかつ、あんた、変態じゃないの！」

—第七章 六千年の真実—



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Chapter 1: Mystery of the Holy Land

A cylindrical ship slowly sailed past the dark sea bed, where no light fell.

This was the 'sea dragon ship' towed by sea dragons.

The ship did not sail on water, instead it moved through the sea like a submarine.

Just a few hours ago, Saito and the others, who were being hunted down by the Elven navy, only managed to escape the 'dragon's nest' because they got saved by Ali's party, who were chasing after Luctiana.

Ali, wanting to protect Luctiana who was sentenced to death by the Elven High Council, was preparing for the both of them to escape to the Kingdom of Gallia in self-exile. However, it was impossible to sneak into Halkeginia on their own. So, they planned to have Saito, who had good relations with the Gallian royalty, help them out by pulling some strings of his own.

In the dark rocking cabin, Saito never let go of Tiffania's hand as she lay on the bed. Her whole body was covered in bandages, and she was attached to Elven medical equipment. She suffered near-fatal injury when Fatima, from the 'Steel-blooded Party', tried to kill her with a gun.



It had been some time after escaping from the 'dragon's nest', but Tiffania still did not show any signs of waking up. She had just called out Saito's name over and over in her dreams. Every time Saito heard that, he would clench her hands tighter, and whisper to her, "Tiffa, I'm so sorry... For not being able to protect you."

Saito looked after Tiffania by her side, while berating himself repeatedly.

It was all my fault that Tiffania got hurt by the gun. If I had thought about it more, I should have known that the cannon shots onto the water were just to distract them...

I should have at least let Tiffa board the patrol boat before. Instead, I said horrible things to her, like her being in the way, and pushed her away.

...And then this happened.

Damn, what kind of Gandalf am I? I can't even protect people important to me at the most crucial times... I've just got some power of my own, and I have become so conceited.

Saito raised his head, and glared at the other girl lying at the back of the cabin.

Having similar delicate features resembling Tiffania's, she was the culprit who shot Tiffania, Fatima. After Saito crushed her shoulder bone in a fit of rage, she fainted and was carried by Ali and the others to the boat.

The sleeping girl breathed steadily and carried a peaceful expression on her face.

Saito clenched his teeth in rage. He tried to calm the fire in his heart by inhaling deeply.

This person tried to kill Tiffania, causing her harm.

Rage erupted up in his heart, unable to forgive her for what she did.

If... If Tiffania was really killed by her that time... Saito, under the influence of rage, would have killed her in revenge.

However, no matter what, Tiffania was still alive. So he should just stop it. Killing her would just make Tiffania sad.

"...Saito, eh, Saito... are you there?"

However, she have not regained consciousness. From just now, she kept going in and out of dream state and shouting out for Saito.

"Don't be scared, I'll always be here. Because I am... Tiffania's familiar."

"Saito..."

As if she had heard Saito and felt relieved, Tiffania began to sleep quietly while breathing steadily again.

Saito slowly released his hand from hers, and gave a small sigh.

"Familiar... eh."

While he was mumbling to himself, he felt the runes on his chest throb.

Now, Saito has new runes on his chest.

This was due to Tiffania, in a pinch, chanted the "Summon" spell while she was half-conscious. And to answer her summons, Saito was teleported before her.

"I felt so happy... that Saito, you were the one to answer my 'Summon' spell, and came to my side. This meant that where I belong... is by your side... and it also means that between Saito and me, there is a real connection..."

Saito had already became Louise's familiar, so it should have been impossible for the teleportation gate to appear before him again. But the longing that Tiffania had for Saito had surpassed the supposedly insurmountable laws of magic and allowed Saito to be re-summoned, and became a new familiar.

However, at the same time, several questions came up in Saito's mind.

Saito's left hand still had the runes of Gandalf engraved on them... so it meant that he was still Louise's familiar, but now he was also Tiffania's familiar.

A double familiar contract... was this really possible?

And the power of the fourth familiar, what will it be?

Gandalf can use any weapon, Windalf can command any beast, Mjödvitnir can operate any magical object at her will.

"Then what can the fourth familiar do?"

His chest throbbed with pain, making Saito feel an uneasiness that he could not put into words.

"What kind of destiny will we face, after this?"

Through the cabin window, Saito stared out to the dark open sea.

Where were they now?

Had they passed the borders of the country of elves?

"Louise and the others must be worried right now..."

Right now, she must be so nervous that her eyes has gone red, while desperately trying to find Saito who had gone missing.

Saito felt a pang of sadness as he thought of Louise, who he had left in D'Orneilles.

Louise, my cute love. Her smart twinkling eyes had a depth of its own. Her strawberry blond hair, her porcelain snow-white skin, and her flat chest... everything about her made me love her even more.

I want to meet Louise as soon as possible... I want to see her, and hug her tightly. Even though I had only been to the country of elves for a few days, my thoughts of her never faded.

Not only Louise, there was also Siesta, Tabitha, Kirche, Mr. Colbert, the Princess, Guiche, and Malicorne, and everyone in the Undine Knights... I wanted to meet everyone so much.

Right. When I get back to Halkeginia, I have to report about the 'Holy Land' to everyone.

As he thought about this important thing, Saito's head began to hurt.

The holy land was renowned to be the place where Founder Brimir first came upon. What the elves call 'Shaitan's Door', according to the pope, had a magical device that could stop the 'Great Uprising'.

To regain control of the holy lands, the residents of Halkeginia have continuously waged war with the elves.

"The holy land is the dragon's nest, whether Mother Sea resided."

This, Saito believed in.

Gandalfr's 'gun' was found not far from the holy land.

There were a lot of weapons from Earth in the dragon's nest. Rusty tanks, jets, guns, grenade launchers, and even the unbelievably huge nuclear submarine... even though it had sunk to the bottom of the sea, but six thousand years ago, that place must have been land.

However, was he really told everything?

He has always felt that the Pope and Julio were hiding something from him.

The rampant 'wind stones' causing the 'Great Uprising', will destroy Halkeginia... This much was the truth, but Saito still had doubts about them that he could not put into words.

Maybe the pope had already knew the position of the 'Holy Land' long ago.

"What did that place really contain?"

Mother Sea had always thought that the underwater cave was simply a normal trash site. If there really was some magical device there, Mother Sea would have known about it.

The secret behind the 'Holy Land' that was gradually being unraveled, the new rune of the familiar carved on him, and the reason why the first Gandalfr Sasha killed Brimir...

If he did not solve the mystery of what really happened there six thousand years ago, he would not be able to save Halkeginia at all... Saito did not know why, but he had this feeling all along.

Maybe it was that the person who knew the most about what happened six thousand years ago, has been quiet for few hours now.

Saito spoke to the katana lying vertically on the side of the cabin.

"Hey, Derf, could you please wake up? There are many things that I want to ask you about."

However, Derflinger remained unresponsive. After the runes of the fourth

familiar appeared on Saito's chest, Derflinger never responded to him at all. Saito was not able to tell if he was unconscious, or simply asleep.

"What's up with that. Is this thing really that bad?"

Saito got more and more uneasy. He lowered his head to look at the runes on his chest.

At this time, the sound of someone knocking rudely on the door echoed around the cabin.

"I'm coming in, barbarian."

The person who entered the cabin, was Ali, holding a breakfast plate.

Ali glanced at Saito, who was sitting on the floor, and then shifted his vision to Luctiana, who was lying on the bed beside Tiffania.

"How is she?"

Saito shook his head.

"She hasn't awoken, but she also doesn't seem to be uncomfortable anymore."

"Is that so."

Ali walked to the side of Luctiana's bed. He chewed his lip bitterly.

"If only I had some training in healing magic."

Luctiana's injuries were so serious that even the Firstborn magic of the elves could not heal her easily. Also, Ali and his party were elves with battle training, so they were not skilled in healing.

"How's the half-blood doing?"

"Tiffa keeps speaking in her dreams. Is this medical equipment really enough for her?"

"We have tried our best. But there's only emergency medical equipment on board this ship, so we should find a place with something more adequate as soon as possible."

Ali sat beside Saito and, with a straight face, gave him the breakfast plate

filled with food.

"This breakfast was made by Idris. Eat."

On the plate, there were roasted meat, sliced onions and cabbages, sandwiched between a flat piece of bread, topped with a red sauce. Even though there was nothing like it in Halkeginia, Saito knew something very like it.

"It looks like a Shawarma burrito from Earth."

"Shawarma burrito? What's that?"

Ali looked surprised.

"I'm sorry, why don't you eat it instead, I have no appetite now."

Saito shook his head. To be honest, he was extremely hungry now. However, with Tiffania treading the borders of life and death, how could he allow himself to fill his stomach?

"No, you have to eat it even if you have force yourself to."

"I'll eat it later."

"We might have to fight with the naval forces later, so if you're out of energy due to hunger that would not be good for us."

"...All right, I understand, I'll eat it."

Under Ali's persuasion, Saito took the food that looked like a Shawarma burrito reluctantly.

Opening his mouth wide, he stuffed the whole thing into his mouth with abandon, downing it with gulps of water.

"G-guh...That was tasty!"

It was tasty. The Shawarma burrito was extremely tasty.

When he bit into the meat and cabbage, marinated with sweet spicy sauce, meat juices just exploded in his mouth. Sweet onions and fragrant spices gave off a rich aroma.

Maybe it was because his stomach got excited by the sudden entry of food, Saito's stomach began to rumble.

It was as if his body just remembered what hunger felt like.

"What a barbaric way of eating. No wonder you are called barbarians."

"Oh shut it. This is how we eat it on earth."

Saito retorted while licking the sauce off his fingers.

He breathed a sigh of relief after finishing breakfast. His nerves, previously stiff, loosened up, and his mood relaxed a little.

Saito stared at the darkness beyond the window, and asked Ali.

"Where are we now, approximately? Have we passed the border?"

"Not yet. This 'Sea Dragon Ship' is different from a military vessel, so it can't go as fast. Also the navy has already blockaded the shortest path."

"Are those guys still hunting us?"

"Of course. This is because you people are the devil, and we are traitors of the elves. The 'Steel-Blooded Party' that is controlling the navy now wants to exterminate every devil even if they had to sacrifice themselves to do it. Of course they will hunt us down to the ends of the earth."

Ali took a glance at Fatima who was sleeping at the back of the cabin.

"Even though I originally thought of using her as a hostage when I brought her on board, to be honest, I'm not even sure if we can use her at all. They wouldn't even think twice about sacrificing the lives of their comrades to exterminate devils. That is the sort of organization they are."

Saito looked at the cabin ceiling uneasily.

"Then what should we do next?"

"We will stop by Eumenes, then we will proceed to Gallia on land."

"Eumenes?"

"It's a town that lies on the far western edge of the desert, where barbarians and elves trade."

"Humans and elves? Is there such a place?"

This was what made Saito very surprised. He once thought that the snobbish

elves would not give a damn to communicate with humans, so it was a little incredulous for him.

"But the High Council will never acknowledge it. There are places like that at the border, and Luctiana often goes there to research barbarians."

Ali's eyes turned to Luctiana.

"There are medical facilities in Eumenes, we shall heal those two there."

Just then, the ship suddenly rocked heavily, and the speed of the ship dropped.

"What's happening?"

"Shallar seems to be in a bad mood. I'll go take a look."

Ali then stood up. Shallar was the name of the sea dragon that is propelling the boat. It was the same dragon that Saito defeated in the canal just as they were escaping from Adyl.

"You get some sleep, be ready to fight at all times."

"It's alright. I have to be awake when Tiffa comes round."

"Humph, stubborn barbarian."

Ali shrugged indifferently.

Just then, a dreamy voice could be heard from the bed.

"...Um, uh, uh..."

"Tiffa?"

Saito jolted and raised his head, surprised.

However, he immediately found out that, no, this was not Tiffa's sound at all!

"You... bunch of devils..."

Lustrous blond hair fluttered across his vision.

Fatima, who got up from bed, gave Saito a glare full of hatred with her jade green eyes.

Chapter 2: Suicide Attack to Adyl

Streaks of light peeked through the desert night sky... The 'Ostland', which Louise and the others were on, flew at maximum speed while spewing out thick black smoke.

There were no resistance from any of the Elves in sight anymore. This was because Louise had wiped out the elite Elven air force, consisting of ten war ships and sixteen patrol ships, with her "Explosion" spell.

However, the 'Ostland' was also heavily damaged after bearing the brunt of the cannon shells. There were gaping holes in the ship hull, and the steam engine which had been stretched to its limits, had almost broken down. For it to continue flying up till now was nothing short of a miracle.

"Jean! I can see it now!" Kirche yelled out while leaning on the bulwark.

"So, that is the Elven capital city, Adyl?"

Adyl. The capital of 'Nephthys', the country of the elves.

It was a magnificent artificial city built on the desert which was surrounded by the sea.

Criss-crossed by a network of huge canals, the city was filled with neatly arranged buildings with white walls. Islands, made of reclaimed land, peppered the sea around it, while many ships went back and forth between them.

Overwhelmed by the sheer scale of the city, Colbert could not help but let out a sigh.

A completely different sight from what one would find in Halkeginia, it showed the deep technological disparity between the humans and the elves.

At the same time, Colbert felt as if his heart became as heavy as lead. "After this, are they really going to be fighting against an opponent capable of building such a city...?" He thought.

In the middle of Adyl, which oversaw the sea, stood a colossal white tower.

At a glance, the giant tower was about two hundred miles tall and bore no resemblance to any Halkeginian building. It had a strictly functional design devoid of any ornamental structure.

The building was of course, the 'Kasbah', where the highest Elven authority, the 'Council' was located.

They were now only a dozen leagues away from the center of Adyl...

A somber atmosphere hung in the air just as Guiche asked, "Mr. Colbert, I have a question."

"What would that be, Mr. Gramont?"

"Where will we be landing?"

There seemed to be a landing platform for Wind Dragons at the apex of the tower, but it did not seem capable of holding such a large air ship.

"We'll crash-land the ship into the tower itself." Colbert said firmly.

Guiche could not believe his ears. Even Kirche widened her eyes.

"What? Are you serious?" Éléonore, who had been at the helm, shouted out to him.

"Of course, only someone crazy would do that."

"Huh?"

"But that is why, the elves might not be prepared to deal with this." Colbert said this with a serious expression.

Actually this was not some special plan to attack the enemy where they were least expected. They had to bet on this kind of plan to even get a millionth of a chance since they would not even have a millionth of a chance of winning a head-on battle against the elves.

"No matter how you put it, this is too reckless!"

"It was already reckless from the point where we rushed into Elven territory anyway." Colbert retorted.

"W-what if, we fail?"

"Then we'll be blasted into bits.", Malicorne said nonchalantly.

"Hey, what is that attitude of yours... One small mistake and it will cost us our lives, you know."

"And that's why you have a big responsibility not to drive us to our death, big sis."

"Are you asking to be kicked off the ship?"

"Well, it wouldn't be too bad if I would be able to go to heaven with big sis hand-in-hand, I think."

"Why would anyone want to go to heaven with you, or even take your hand, huh?" Éléonore booted Malicorne off to the bulwark in one swift motion, before gripping the helm tightly as if she had made up her mind. "There is no way I'm dying here, because I've not given up on getting married."

The 'Ostland' steered straight for the 'Kasbah'.

Meanwhile, Kirche leaned on Colbert, who was standing on the deck with a serious expression on his face. "Jean, even if this is a journey that ends in hell, I will always be by your side."

"Thank you, Miss Zerbst."

Just then, Kirche noticed that, her blue-haired friend, was sitting in the corner of the deck.

"Seriously? You're reading a book, even at this time?"

Tabitha's eyes did not leave the book, and she only nodded in response to the question.

"You really just do whatever you please, huh?"

What is it that was so interesting to her... Kirche slipped behind Tabitha as she wanted to uncover the mysterious content within the tattered covers of the book.

However, taking a look at the contents only made her more confused.

What Tabitha was reading was a illustrated book for children.

"Oh, this is rare. Isn't most of the books you read much more difficult than this?"

"This is a very important book to me."

"Oh..." Kirche muttered in disappointment as she turned to look at the bow.

Louise was sleeping soundly on Siesta's lap there.

Louise had been sleeping like that ever since she used up all her mental will to cast a powerful "Explosion" spell at the Elven air fleet.

"Poor girl. But it seems that you will have to wake up soon."

"You're saying that the barbarians are launching an attack here?"

"What the heck is Commander Amran doing?!"

At this time... The 'Kasbah' council had devolved into chaos.

This was not just something strange, since not only was the entire Elven air fleet destroyed, a barbarian ship also took the chance to speed towards Adyl. This was simply unheard of in the long history of human-Elf wars.

"Mmhmm. It seems that we might have underestimated the abilities of the barbarians."

Upon hearing what the old elf on the council speaker seat, Turuk, had muttered, the council members turned grim.

"This is no joking matter, Mr. President. They must be the 'Undertakers' who are coming to retrieve the 'Devils'." One of the council members spoke up.

"I've never would have thought that they were going to make a beeline for the 'Kasper'."

"There aren't many guards here, are there?"

"What are you afraid of? They are only barbarians, what could they do even if they were to come here?"

After hearing one of the younger council member scoffing, some of the other members began to voice their agreements.

Well, it was true that every one of the elves in the council were powerful users of 'Firstborn Magic'. They did not need to be afraid of barbarian magic, so it was natural for them to look down on the enemy.

Worry sprung up in Turuk's mind as he surveyed the racket around him.
"What a bunch of incurable fools."

How can they hold a meeting so calmly during these urgent times?

The peace and harmony all these centuries has corrupted the council. As a result, fanatic zealots like the 'Steel-Blooded Party' rose in power.

"Even if our opponent are barbarians, we can not let our guard down. Didn't you see how our air fleet was annihilated by them?"

Everyone quieted down as Turuk threw a wet blanket over their heated discussion.

"In any case, it would be better if we don't make the mistake of underestimating them. They might pull off something unexpected."

The council members did not seem to heed his advice.

Turuk let out a sigh, looked away with a forlorn face and sunk into deep thought.

"Miss... Miss Vallière, please wake up immediately."

"Mm... mm..."



Siesta rocked Louise's shoulders gently, but Louise only flipped to the side.

"... Saito, I-I can't do this, to wear a collar in the courtyard... what the heck were you thinking..."

"What kind of dream is that?" Siesta could not help but roll her eyes as she heard that.

"Stop sleeping, please wake up now. The only thing that can fight against the elves, is Miss Vallière's 'Void' magic."

"... Wu... I shall not forgive you this time. Y-you made a noble like me, dress up so, embarrassingly..."

Siesta sighed and moved her face towards Louise's ears. "Please wake up now. Come on, wake up... Wake up now. Wake up, you, the one without a chest."

Tremble.

"Flat-chest, washboard, Tarbes plains."

Tremble tremble.

"Such a flat, flat, flat chest~"

Every time Siesta sung her strange song, Louise's ears trembled to the rhythm of the melody.

"Miss Vallière's flat chest is the flattest it can be~"

Louise jolted upright.

"You maid! Are y-y-you done with that song!"

"Ah, you're finally awake. Get up, we're about to go in, so please prepare yourself."

"Go in?" Louise asked back with drowsy eyes.

"Yes, I think we're going to ram the ship into the tower."

"Huh?" Louise instantly woke up completely. "What? What are you saying again? I didn't understand what you've said."

Just then, the 'Ostland' began to shake violently.

"W-wait, what's happening... Aaaaaah!"

Louise and Siesta hugged each other as they rolled around on the deck.

"We're going in! Mr. Gramont, cast 'Fortification' on the bow now!"

After hearing Colbert's command, Guiche began casting the spell for "fortification" while grabbing the bulwark like everyone else on the ship. Layers upon layers of magical shield immediately covered the ship hull.

"We're dipping down at thirty degrees! Everyone, hold on tight to something near you!"

The 'Ostland' charged headfirst diagonally downwards at an incredible speed.

"Humph, well then, watch me handle this! I'll let you know the abilities of a woman who can't be married!" Éléonore held the helm tightly as she yelled out desperately.

"That's the spirit! Big sis!"

"Shut the hell up!" Éléonore booted Malicorne off to the bulwark again.

Just then, the elves on the tower realized their motive. Elven guards rushed to the tower terraces and began to cast 'Firstborn Magic'.

Countless fireballs, arrows of light, and wind blades ravaged the ship hull. It seems that they thought of changing the path of the ship, even by a little, since they were not able to destroy such a huge object.

"Fatty, blast them away."

"One big blast coming right up!"

Malicorne ran rolling and crawling to the "main cannon" on the front deck, and licked it.

The numbers, '324' were painted on the turret.

The main cannon of the 'Ostland' was not just any ordinary large cannon. Colbert had forcibly installed the eighty-eight millimeter cannon from the 'Tiger Tank' onto the ship.

Malicorne targeted the elves on the terrace through the sights and pulled the trigger forcefully.

Boom! The cannon roared thunderously as it spat out a huge cannon shell. At the same time, the shell flew forward in a straight line and devastated the terrace.

"Well done, fatty!" Éléonore kept turning the steering wheel while she planted her foot onto Malicorne's face as he was blown away by the shock wave. Malicorne had a face of pure bliss as his face was stepped on.

They came closer and closer to the huge frame of the 'Kasbah'.

Fifty mails, forty mails, thirty mails, twenty mails...

"Impact imminent!" Guiche screamed out.

In an instant, the ship bow collided into the walls with a deafening blast.

"Aaaaaah!"

The collision force was so strong that Louise and Siesta involuntarily let go of the bulwark.

Their bodies were thrown out of the ship. There was a brief moment where Louise felt as if gravity had disappeared. "Ah, I'm going to fall..." Just as she thought this, she felt as if somebody grabbed hold of her collar and pulled her up.

"Huh?"

"Kyui, kyui. You're really a troublemaker, little red one!"

Still in shock, Louise, raised her head only to find Sylphid, who was carrying Tabitha on her back, hooking them by their collars.

"T-thank you."

Tabitha answered Louise's soft words of gratitude with a curt nod, her face expressionless.

The dust in the air gradually settled down.

They could see how the gigantic body of the 'Ostland' was stuck mid-way into the tower.

Even though most of the hull armor was destroyed, the engines and the motors were just barely functioning. If the ship had been made of wood, even if

the 'fortification' spell was cast on it, it would still break for sure.

"Is everyone alright?" Colbert coughed as he tried to stand up.

"Miss Éléonore, that was some superb steering you did there."

"What the hell was I even doing just now..." Éléonore grumbled as she coughed.

"Alright then, we'll be charging into the heart of Elven territory. Is everyone ready for this?"

After hearing what Colbert has said, everyone nodded silently. They each began to pull out their magic wands.

"Very well." Colbert then took the lead, and jumped down from the deck, followed by Louise, Kirche, Guiche, Malicorne and Tabitha.

Siesta, who was not capable of magic, and Éléonore, who was the ship pilot, stayed on the ship so that they could take off immediately after they brought a hostage.

"Be careful, little one, kyui, kyui!" Sylphid yelled out, concerned about everyone. Tabitha nodded and said that it would be alright.

Siesta crawled onto the bulwark, and said to Louise, "Miss Vallière, you have to come back with Saito and Tiffania. Promise me that."

"Yup, I'll promise you that."

"Miss Vallière, you also have to return safely to us, okay?"

"Of course."

"You really, really have to, you know."

"I know, I know."

"If... Miss Vallière doesn't come back, Saito will be mine, okay?"

"In your dreams."

After hearing Louise answer without missing a beat, Siesta gave her a small smile.

"Oh? Your legs are shaking, Guiche."

"This is called the warrior's tremblings. What would you know about that, huh?" Guiche retorted Kirche's teasing in an attempt to boost his courage. "So what if we're going to fight against Elves. Even when he was knocked down by my Golems countless times, Saito still stood his ground and did not surrender. He was the one who proved that commoners could fight back against the magicians. Fighting with the Elves is nothing compared to that."

Guiche held on to his wand tightly. "Also, what we've chosen to take part in, is a honourable battle to save our comrades. Don't you think so too?"

"That's right, to save our comrade... and the fairy with a large chest. This is the best battle ever. It's such a simple goal, we're not like those Romanians yelling about some holy crusade." Malicorne said.

"That's right, we could even save the world. Think about it, if we manage to return alive, wouldn't that make us so popular with the girls?"

"Guiche, didn't you already have Mon-Mon?"

"This and that are completely different things. Would you complain about being more popular with the girls?"

"You're right."

The both of them patted each other's backs and laughed at each other.

"You guys..." Louise could not help but roll her eyes at them.

Colbert gave a light cough. "Ahem."

"After we charge into the place, we will take an elf with a ranking as high as possible as our hostage, and have them to exchange the elf for Saito."

"How will we be able to know which elf are the higher ranking ones?" Louise asked.

"Well, at least, I think those elves won't be dressed as a guard."

They will look like those elves back in Alhambra then, Louise thought to herself.

"I'll take care of the guards from the lower levels of the tower." Tabitha said.

"Are you okay alone?" Louise asked worriedly.

"It's alright. I'm used to working alone."

"Be careful, okay?"

Tabitha gave a small nod, before casting the 'Flying' spell and flew down from the tall tower.

"Miss Valiere, how many times could you use the 'Void' again?"

"I think I could use it a few more times."

Even though Louise said it with a firm voice, she was actually just trying to put on a brave face. To tell the truth, her mental will had been highly diminished by the extra powerful 'Explosion' spell she cast to annihilate the Elven air fleet.

However, the thought that 'she must save Saito' called out in her mind, making her heart tremble. This trembling of her heart was the source of her mental will, the ammunition need to cast 'Void' spells. That feeling superseded her anger, her joy and even her grief... As long as the trembling of her heart, due to her yearning for Saito, exists, no matter how tough it was, she would be able to fight her way out of it.

"Saito, could you please wait for me, just a little longer... I'll save you."

Maybe they've taken away his sanity and his memories of me, but even so, I will never give up.

That's because he's my familiar, and I'm his master, and a-also his lover... That's right, when we meet, I must make him hug me tightly, t-then make him kiss me...

"Oh please, what are you daydreaming about?"

She noticed that Kirche was asking her with a face full of doubt.

"I-I wasn't daydreaming at all!" Louise's face could not help but flush red at Kirche's question.

"Shall we go then, to save Saito and Miss Tiffania." Colbert said, as he raised his wand up high.

And so, after everyone silently overlapped their wands in the air, they

charged straight into the heart of the tower.

Chapter 3: The Elven Tower

Louise and the others, lead by Colbert rushed into the tower and ran past the corridors.

Lamp-like magical devices lined on the walls of both sides, the weak illumination showed doors along the corridor. Missing statues, drawings and other superfluous decorations highlighted the different atmosphere it had compared to the Halkeginia palaces.

A deep alarm echoed within the tower.

"Try not to make any footstep sounds. Don't do anything on your own, and wait for my command." Colbert said softly. Beads of sweat slowly formed on his forehead. He had never felt this choking feeling of anxiety before.

They had sneaked into the enemy base without a map nor any information about them. Even though he had participated in all kinds of battles during his tenure as the leader of 'Magical Research Experimental Group', this was his first time he had taken part in such a reckless mission.

Not only that, they were also fighting against elves.

Would they be able to leave this place alive? In the worst case, even if their plan were to fail, he should at least let the student escape with their lives... As he thought about this, his expression turned even more severe.

"Where are all the elves?"

"Well, for most of the places with high ranking people, they would be at the apex of the building." Guiche answered after hearing Louise ask softly. "That is the case with Halkeginia."

After walking for some time, they entered an empty space that looked like a hall in the intersections of the corridors. Colbert stopped moving, and waved his staff to block the students behind him.

"Jean, is there something wrong?"

"Elves."

The word made everyone take in a cold breath.

Elves dressed like guards appeared at the other end of the corridor.

The beings named Elves, were existences that could take on a thousand human warriors alone. There were three of those fearsome warriors before them.

After that, the enemy noticed them, and immediately unsheathed their blades before running towards them.

Colbert instantly cast a 'Flameball' in response.

With flames stronger than what any Square Mage could output by four times, three spheres of fire, with twice the radius of a 'Fireball', shot towards the Elves while dragging trails of flames.

Sounds of explosions thundered across the corridor and the air itself shook as the powerful flames ravaged the elves. A merciless attack, made in stark contrast to Colbert's typical good-natured appearance. Louise and the others stood dumbfounded behind him.

"Couldn't we have taken them as hostages?" Malicorne said.

"I don't think guards would have any value as hostages, and also..."

Colbert turned grim, and shot a glare towards the flames in the other end.

"I don't think we can afford to be merciful to the enemies we're facing."

They heard a strong gust howl across the corridor, sucking the flames into a swirling tornado and removing every trace of fire.

There was not even so much as a burnt cinder on the elves.

"So that's the power of 'Firstborn Magic'... What terrifying strength."

Colbert muttered. On the other hand, the warriors seem to be yelling in Elvish. It seemed to be something insulting, since they mentioned something about the 'devil'.

"Leave this to me."

Guiche stepped to the front pompously as he waved his rose wand. Seven rose petals danced gracefully in the air, before turning into seven Valkyries, holding short spears, who stood in front of the Elves.

"Charge, my Valkyries!"

Upon Guiche's command, the Valkyries immediately rushed forward.

However, the Elves simply jumped to them with their weapons made short work of the Valkyries with a few fluid strokes.

"Hey, what the heck?" Guiche's face turned green, and cold sweat rained down Colbert's brow.

There was an unimaginable strength hidden within the lithe bodies of the elves. Maybe they enhanced their bodies within their weapons and bodies.

"I would recommend that we escape while we can."

"Agreed." Colbert concurred with Malicorne's suggestion.

It was pointless for them to obtain a Pyhrric victory here. While Louise might be able to do something with her 'Void' magic, they should not simply waste their ace here.

"There's a path here."

Louise pointed towards a corridor at the side.

"Alright, you guys, leave now. I'll hold them off."

Colbert waved his staff and summoned a monstrous serpent of flame in one swift motion.

A cold and emotionless smile that he would have never shown to the students appeared on his face. Colbert radiated an feeling that he would scorch anyone who touched him. Every one except Kirche felt goosebumps travel down their spine.

The colossal flame serpent, befitting of his title, 'Colbert the Flame Serpent', whisked towards the elves like a whip.

The Elven warriors, strong as they are, did not tread forward as confidently as

before, against the ferocious flame serpent. They might not have expected such a powerful Mage among the barbarians.

"Mr. Colbert!"

"Leave now! Quickly!"

After hearing Colbert's uncompromising command, Louise and the others could only rush down the corridor hurriedly.

Colbert summoned another flame serpent as he backed off. He was not planning to fight the enemy to the end here, since the enemy in question was the Elves.

Colbert sneaked a peek at the ceiling of the corridor before scheming coolly.

"I would have to lure them deeper into the corridor first."

The two flame serpents intertwined without any intention of letting their prey go free. One of the Elves seemed to have gotten tired of the battle that was going nowhere, and started chanting something. No matter what kind of spell that was, there was no way he could win after the spell chanting was complete. Spells of a smaller scale would have no effect against the powerful 'Firstborn Magic'

"I'm not going to let you do that."

Colbert extinguished the flame serpents and immediately began casting the spell for 'Flameball'.

He aimed the three of them at the cracks in the ceiling.

The ceiling exploded before crashing down with a deafening noise and burying the Elves under it.

The cracks were created when the airship rammed into the tower. Colbert stepped back while masterfully controlling the flame serpents to lure the Elves right under the cracks.

After that, Colbert waved his staff, and cast the earth magic, 'Alchemy' on the pile of rubble. It hardened, and became a huge block of brick and mortar.

The Elves had already used 'Firstborn Magic' to enhance their bodies, so being

buried under the rubble would probably not kill them. However, it should stall them for a while.

"I have to move fast."

Just as Colbert was about to chase after Louise and the others, the pile of rubble, which should have been solidified by 'Alchemy', began to distort itself, like it was alive.

To prevent the guards from the lower levels from reaching them at the top, Tabitha, who had split from the group, descended on the terrace that had been destroyed by the cannon of the 'Ostland'.

She used the 'Air Hammer' to destroy the glass window and entered the tower. She purposefully made a huge din to attract the attention of the guards.

The place that Tabitha had entered was a round space that was illuminated by magic. It looked like some sort of hall. There was a towering metal door at the deepest end.

The metal door suddenly opened with a bang.

Three armed Elves appeared.

Tabitha immediately cast the 'Windy Icicle' spell towards them.

Five sharp pointed arrows of ice sped towards the elves.

However, they did not even reach their target before they were repelled by the strong gusts, not unlike a tornado, around the Elves.

It was the wind 'Firstborn Magic', but that was within Tabitha's expectations. She intentionally used less powerful magic to confirm the numbers of enemies.

Tabitha determined that... there was no one among them who could use the terrifying spell, 'Reflect'. As expected, even among the Elves, only a select few could use such a formidable 'Firstborn Magic'.

Tabitha cast the 'Blade' spell on her staff, and swiftly slashed at the trio.

The elves were stunned for a moment. They generally assumed that... the barbarian Mages only could cast spells with exaggerated hand motions, which

made them extremely vulnerable. Therefore, an assassin-like Mage who attacked nimbly and cast spells while not letting the enemy see their lip motions was a never before heard enemy for them.

The vacuum blade extending out of the staff cut open the 'Wind Shield' and the uniform of the elf who looked like the team leader.

The elf looked shocked. Tabitha twirled her staff rapidly and cast a 'Javelin' at point blank range.

The huge ice spear slammed straight into his chest plate and knocked the elf who looked like the team leader far away.

"First, one down."

Tabitha calmly counted in her mind as she withdrew her staff.

Tabitha's original style of battle was to use a variety of long range spells to suppress the enemy. Using the 'Blade' spell in hand-to-hand combat was not her forte.

However, she would not have any chance of winning against the Elves if they were able to use the powerful 'Firstborn Magic'.

As such, the only effective way was to take the first strike. She would use the condescending attitude that the Elves had towards barbarian Mages, and defeated them while they were still confused.

As she continue to channel magic into her staff, she felt as if her heart was slowly enclosed by ice. As she focused her concentration to the maximum point where she attained perfect tranquility, the world around her slowed down to a snail's pace. She even managed to see each of the surprised expressions on the Elves.

"This should do."

This was what she wanted, that feeling from before. If she was unable to retrieve this cold, absolute-zero heart, she would never be able to win against the Elves.

Just like when Tabitha the Snowstorm still had the title of the 'Seventh' knight of the North Parterre.

Suddenly, Tabitha felt a faint presence behind her. This was something akin to the sixth sense, a product of training her intuition during her long years of working in the shadows.

Tabitha quickly ducked down before a blade of light nearly sliced through the air above her head. As she turned around, Tabitha went around the elf behind her and cast a 'Javelin' at him. She confirmed that the Elf was knocked away at a corner of her eye, before slashing the other Elf. However, the enemy was no pushover, so not only did he manage to dodge the invisible blade, he also managed to cast 'Firstborn Magic'.

Tabitha saw that and could not help but panicked a little.

To fight 'Firstborn Magic' head-on with Mage magic... There would be no chance of winning.

Tabitha chose to chase after the enemy to attack before he could, but this was just what he wanted her to do.

Warning bells rang in her head as she felt as if she stepped into a swamp.

Tabitha immediately cast 'Flying', but she was slower by just a hairbreadth. A hand emerged of the earth caught her leg and slammed her into the ground.

The warrior yelled something loud in Elvish, and slashed downwards.

Tabitha hastily turned over and parried it with center of her staff. As the blade closed in on her eyes, the blue pupils of Tabitha began to shake uncontrollably. Fear slowly crept into the core of her frozen heart.

There was no one else who knew about what terrible things the Elves could do than Tabitha. When she went to her old mansion in Orléans to save her mother... Tabitha could not do anything against the Elves.

The blade before her eyes was just barely above the tip of her nose. "Is this the end..." Tabitha closed her eyes, as if she had accepted her fate.

Just then, a face appeared in Tabitha's mind. It was the face of the young man that Tabitha had admired secretly in her heart.

Suddenly, the young man's appearance merged with the main character of the book that Tabitha had read before.

"The Hero of Ivaldi."

He was the hero of the legendary story that Tabitha had always yearned for since she was young.

"At the time, I was a princess who was saved and liberated by the hero. However, this is my turn. I will be the one who will save that person, the 'Hero of Ivaldi'."

"I cannot, die here."

Tabitha closed her eyes and started to chant a spell.

"Rakus Wotale Isu Yise Hagaras."

Tabitha's staff began to shine, and from that beam of light, a powerful wind howled into existence.

The Elf looked a little shaken. The prey, driven into the corner, rebounded with even greater strength.

He increased pressure on the blade as he saw this, trying to cut both Tabitha and her staff.

However, there was no longer any fear in Tabitha's mind, as she continued to chant the spell with a frigid voice.

The surrounding air instantly froze in the freezing hazy gusts. The frozen air turned into threads, swirling in between the both of them.

The Elf's eyes opened wide as his face turned into a shocked expression. It would be impossible for her to escape unscathed if she used this spell at such a close distance.

However, Tabitha froze every feeling of fear she had in her heart, and finished chanting her spell.

-- 'Blizzard'.

This spell, that was originally just a Triangle spell, reached the power of a Square spell. Countless blades of ice rampaged mercilessly across the hall, slashing through everything it touched.

The immeasurably powerful tornado of icy blades lashed out at Tabitha's

petite body, and threw her against the wall.

Tabitha gingerly opened her eyes and looked around, only to find a Elven warrior lie before her, the armor on his body completely shredded apart. It might have been that he stepped back to dodge the spell, causing him to take even more damage than Tabitha who had been in the eye of the storm.

Tabitha struggled to get on her feet.

After defeating the three Elves... How many more of these tough opponents would she has to face?

Tabitha cast the 'Night Vision' spell on herself as she arrived at the passageway outside the hall. Even if she was not able to defeat the guards from the levels below, she had to try to stop them in their tracks.

Just then, she heard a set of footsteps in the passageway behind her.

She determined that there was only one person from the footsteps, and that the other person was walking towards her slowly.

Tabitha raised her staff.

The silhouette of an Elf with a long cape emerged from the darkness.

Sweat drops appeared on Tabitha's forehead.

This was because the aura shown by the other person was obviously different from the three Elven warriors just now.

"He's very strong."

Tabitha's intuition, as a warrior who has fought in countless battles, told her that.

The elf stopped moving after noticing Tabitha's presence.

Tabitha immediately cast 'Windy Icicle' towards her opponent without another word. However, the icicle spear turned around and lunged towards Tabitha just as it was about to reach the elf's chest.



'Reflection'.

Tabitha used her staff to knock away the icicle spear and instantly casted 'Blade' as she rushed forward.

The elf with a long cape slowly lifted his hand, seeming to be casting 'Firstborn Magic'.

Tabitha knew well that she would not be living for long if she allowed her opponent to complete the spell.

Just as the vacuum blade rebounded, Tabitha's body was also thrown far away.

"It's useless. No blade can cut through my 'Reflection'."

Blue pupils stared into Tabitha, who was lying on the ground, from beneath the hood.

"Aren't you...!"

Tabitha was frozen in place. Her expression which was once as chill as ice, could not help but show hints of surprise.

"The color of your hair and eyes... are you the princess of Gallia?"

It was Bidashal.

The terrifying elf who imprisoned Tabitha's mother and her in Alhambra.

"Huff, huff... w-wait for me, hey!"

"Can't you run faster? The Elves are going to catch up to us." Guiche urged Malicorne who was already out of breath after just running for a while.

"I'm just not good at running."

"Would it be faster for you to roll instead?"

Just as Kirche said it, a thunderous roar came from their back.

Everyone stopped in their tracks and looked backwards.

"Mr. Colbert?" Louise's tone showed uncertainty.

The explosions echoing around them only served to deepen their fears. However, not long after that... they heard light footsteps heading their way. Colbert was running towards them from the other end of the pathway.

"Jean..."

"It seems like his attempts in stopping the Elves from chasing after us were successful."

Louise and the others let out a sigh of relief when they saw Colbert run towards them.

Nevertheless, they noticed something strange about him.

Why was Mr. Colbert running with all his might with an exasperated feeling on his face?

"W-what is that?!" Guiche paled as he pointed behind Colbert.

When everyone saw the thing was appeared from that direction, they were dumbstruck.

The thing that was chasing after Colbert as he ran away was actually a giant 'arm' made of rock.

"W-what the heck is that?!"

"Are you dumb, of course, it's 'Firstborn Magic'!" Guiche answered, annoyed.

Colbert, who had been running as best as he could, scream out with all his energy, "You guys, everyone, run away as fast as you can! Our magic is useless against it!"

Even if Colbert had not told them that, everyone was already running on the pathway.

"W-when will it stop chasing us?"

"Well, that will of course be when it squashes us." Malicorne answered Louise, who was out of breath.

"What should we do then!"

"Hey, Louise, I thought of a nice strategy." Guiche, who was panting heavily, suddenly spoke.

"What is it?"

"How about everyone just bow down and apologize? Who knows, maybe the Elves are willing to negotiate with us."

"How could there be such a good thing like that. Don't forget, we were the one who rammed a ship into their tower. Also, does anyone among us speak Elvish?"

"I really thought it was a great idea." Guiche groaned loudly as he ran.

"There's a door here!" Malicorne pointed towards the front.

There was a small door at the end of the pathway. There was no other forked paths, so there was no choice for them.

"It seems like we could only hide in there."

"Yeah..."

The deafening din behind them continued to press closer to them.

Louise and the others made a leap of faith and rushed to the door.

Guiche, who reached the door first, tried to push the door with all his strength.

"I can't open it, I think it's locked."

"Move aside."

Kirche whipped out her magic staff, and began chanting the spell for "Fireball".

The door opened in a clean blast from Kirche.

However, behind the door, it was a round room which could only accommodate a few persons.

Kirche showed disappointment upon realizing this.

"Alas, it seems like we're at our wit's end."

Everyone took a look backwards, only to find the giant 'arm' born of Firstborn Magic stormed forward, barely impeded by the walls.

At this rate, everyone would turn into mince meat while holding their hands.

"Oh mighty Founder Brimir, I pray for assistance for your Children in this time of need..."

"Get a grip of yourself, Guiche!" Seeing that Guiche has discarded his wand and sat on the ground, Louise told him that as she pulled his ears.

On the other hand, Colbert crouched and scrutinized at the floor of the small room with a serious expression on his face.

"Jean, what's wrong?"

"This is an elevator." Colbert answered upon hearing' Kirche's question.

"What's an elevator?"

"It's a magical device that uses the power of wind stones to carry people. There are similar devices in the Hamlin Academy of Tristania."

"Does that mean we could control it even if we're not elves?"

"Yes, there's a good chance."

After that, Colbert began to study the round panel of a floor.

"Faster, Mr. Colbert!" Guiche yelled anxiously.

The ground shook as loud sounds closed in on them.

The giant rock 'arm' appeared before them.

Malicorne attacked it with the 'Air Hammer' relentlessly.

Kirche also used her magic wand to shoot 'Fireballs' at it.

Meanwhile, Guiche used Earth Magic to erect a huge wall in front of everyone.

However, none of their magic worked. The 'arm' demolished the wall Guiche made easily and stretched its fingers wide. It was about to crush Louise and others into oblivion.

"Uwah!"

"Oh, I think I know how! Everyone, get in here now!"

After hearing Colbert shout, everyone immediately entered the elevator.

The elevator instantly became crowded when five people entered it.

Colbert used magic to activate the wind stones.

After the initial feeling of weightlessness, the round panel plunged down with a whoosh.

"W-we're saved..."

Everyone breathed a sigh of relief as they descended downwards.

However, it was not all over just yet.

Rumble rumble rumble...!

A heavy rumble came from above.

"I have a bad feeling about this..." Guiche spoke.

"Oh, that's weird, because I feel the same too." Louise trembled as she looked up.

The next instant, a powerful force slammed into the elevator and distorted the ceiling.

"Yiii!" Guiche was so scared that he hugged his head with both hands.

A few continuous hits later, the elevator ceiling was finally ripped apart.

At the same time, the elevator stopped working.

"Get out now!"

Everyone hurriedly crawled out of the elevator upon hearing Colbert yell out. The elevator they had been riding just now was then promptly pulverized by the giant rock 'arm'.

"Can't they just let us go!" Kirche could not help but exclaim.

"Allow me." Louise walked forward, and raised her wand.

She then closed her eyes, and focused inwards. The face of her favorite familiar then immediately appeared before her.

"Saito... Where are you right now? What are you doing right now?"

Her memories of him flowed into Louise's mind, and faded away.

There were happy memories and sad memories. There were memories of him being kind and gentle to her and memories where they fought... The memory when they met in the Versailles Courtyard where they hugged each other without any clothes on... The memory when he mistook her for Tabitha, and when she saw him k-kiss the princess, in the basement below the villa... Her blood boiled as she thought about it. "Is S-Saito now being all i-intimate with Tiffania...?"

The powerful waves of emotions within her mind was distilled into her mental willpower that permeated her entire being. Louise chanted the runes of the 'Void' spell, one that she has used so many times that her body would naturally summon it on its own.

Once the chanting was complete, Louise waved her wand.

'Explosion'.

The bright light from the tip of her wand destroyed the giant rock 'arm' in a deafening blast.

"Oh, well done, Louise!" Guiche said, out of admiration.

"As expected of Miss Vallière's 'Void' magic, it's effective against the elves' 'Firstborn Magic'."

"Mm, but I can't use it anymore." Louise's legs gave in and she sat limp on the floor as she panted heavily. It seems that the attack just now took a lot from her.

Kirche, worried, asked Louise, "Hey, are you alright?"

"Mm, yeah, I'll be okay..."

"In any case, where are we exactly?"

Kirche lit the tip of her wand, and looked around.

It was a pathway unlike the one they had been in just now.

The ceiling was at least twenty miles high, it seemed like a wide hall of sorts.

"It seems like a place where they have meetings," said Colbert.

"This may be the place where the Council meets... Hmm, that being said, the

elevator just now should be build to reach this place then."

Just then, a bright sphere of light appeared above everyone, and shone over the entire hall.

"Eh?"

What Louise and the others saw in the next instant shocked them.

"The work of the devil, I've seen what you've done."

They were surrounded by dozens of Elves.

Peering down at Louise and the others from the seats that were arranged like a staircase, all of them looked like high ranking Elves with their long flowing robes. In the middle podium of the large hall, there was a serious looking Elf with a long beard.

"T-there's so many of them..." Guiche's voice was shaking.

This was expected since the number of Halkeginian nobles that have seen so many elves could just fit into one hand.

As for the number of nobles who had seen them and lived to tell the tale... it should be zero.

"What's there to be afraid of, even though they are Elves, they are just a bunch of old people anyway." Malicorne's tone has a tinge of hope.

"We could at least take one as hostage, right?"

"Y-yeah. They don't seem to have any weapons anyway."

"You moron." Kirche looked indifferent.

"The power of the 'Firstborn Magic' Elves possess grows with their age. In other words..."

"In other words?"

"Every one of these Elves... especially the old Elf who seems to be the highest authority here, are the most terrifying magic users."

Guiche and Malicorne could not help but take in a cold breath as they heard what Kirche has spoken.

"Welcome to Adyl, barbarians." The old Elf who stood on the tall podium said. He was not talking to them in elvish, but in fluent Gallish, the lingua franca of Halkeginia.

"However, who could have thought that you would reach this place in such a barbaric manner."

"Who are you?" Colbert asked him.

"I am Turuk, the president of this Council."

"The president...!"

This answer made Colbert blurt out in shock.

The original was indeed to kidnap a big-shot Elf as hostage in exchange for Saito and Tiffania.

However, they actually ended up meeting the president himself... This was too much for them.

The president, leader of all the Elves looked downwards at Louise and the others, and advised them, "Foolish barbarians, put down your weapons and surrender. We will treat you well."

"What do you think, Louise?" Kirche shrugged and turned her head to look at Louise.

Louise's hazel-colored eyes shot a determined glance at Turuk.

"We'll never surrender, return Saito and Tiffania to us."

Turuk shook his head.

"Did you mean the undertaker of the work of the devil, and its protector? I'm sorry but we will not oblige. As it stands for us, we cannot allow you to assemble all the trump cards."

Even though Turuk said this, Louise felt relieved. If the elves knew that the Void always would continue to be revived, then it would mean that they would not kill Saito and Tiffania.

"Well then, there's no point negotiating further. The reason why we're here is to bring them back."

Louise answered Turuk, and pointed her magic wand at him.

She then asked the four others behind her.

"Does anyone has any objections?"

"Of course not."

Kirche smiled brightly as she pulled out her magic wand.

"There is no 'surrender' in the Zerbst dictionary."

"Protecting the students is my duty as a teacher."

Colbert also brandished his staff, along with Guiche and Malicorne.

"Thank you, everyone."

Louise rubbed the edge of her eyes.

"I'm not doing this for you, Louise."

"There is no honor in being nobles that just stood aside and did nothing when their allies needed help."

"That's exactly it."

Everyone raised the tip of their wands and staff high and pointed it towards Turuk who stood on the tall podium.

"So this is your answer?"

Turuk shook his head sympathetically.

He then descended down from the tall podium and met Louise and the others in the lower level.

"There's no other choice then, this will be where you breathe your last breath."

Turuk raised his hands and began chanting 'Firstborn Magic'.

"O great spirits of stone, our sturdy protectors..."

The floor suddenly started to shake violently.

The rocky ground floated off the ground and one by one flew into the air.

The rocks slammed and merged with one another, forming a huge slab of

stone.

What appeared in front of Louise and the others was a stone giant that was at least ten mails tall.

"W-what the heck is that!" Guiche could not help but exclaim.

"He really is a fearsome monster". Any trace of a smile was now gone from Kirche's face.

"This was the power that they have boasted about, the power of the 'firstborn' elves."

Turuk swung a balled fist, and the stone giant raised his feet to stomp on the ground.

The ground shook as stone splintered off the ceiling and rained from above.

Even the elves who were looking at them from above were surprised.

"Everyone, leave the place, if you wouldn't want to be caught in the aftermath of the great Elvish power!"

The council members ran to take cover in the corners of the great hall when they heard Turuk's advice.

"Miss Vallière, are you able to cast Void spells?"

"If it were just one spell... then maybe yes I think so." Louise answered. However, anyone could see that she was just putting up a brave face.

"We'll try to delay him as best as we can. You think of something." Kirche said.

"It's all in your hands now, Louise, we can only count on your Void." Guiche said, as he licked his lips.

"Mm, I understand."

The stone giant leapt up with a loud crash. The level of dexterity it displayed compared to the Bronze Valkyries were heaven and earths apart, it was just like a living thing.

The huge silhouette plunged from above. Louise and the others split up and ran for cover.

Rumble rumble rumble!

The stone giant landed with a foot planted into the ground, creating a dust cloud that went everywhere.

Colbert shot three "Flame Balls" at the head of the stone giant which had stopped moving.

Three balls of flame with the ability to home in on their target and a long tail of fire behind them, hit the stone giant head on.

However, no explosion was heard. The surface of the giant glimmered and the balls of flame flew back at Colbert instead.

"Jean!"

Kirche casted the same 'Flameball' spell immediately.

Two sides of fireballs clashed into each other in the air and exploded.

"The body of the giant has been imbued with 'Reflection' magic!"

"My Valkyries! Stop it in its path!"

Guiche waved his rose wand.

The bronze Valkyries instantly appeared around the stone giant, and threw their spears at the giant.

However the short spears thrown by the Valkyries were easily repelled.

"It won't work. That giant is the manifestation of all the elven power within the 'Kasbah'. None of you will be able to hurt it at all."

Turuk proclaimed with a cold voice. The stone giant looked down, and grabbed all the bronze Valkyries in its hand like they were toys and threw them at Guiche.

"Aaaaaah!" Guiche immediately ducked when he saw that.

What remained of the bronze Valkyries flew over Guiche's head. They smashed into the wall and disintegrated into little pieces.

Shortly after that, the giant gave out a low roar and it lowered its head and rushed towards them.

"Split up!" Colbert yelled.

Guiche and the others immediately casted 'Fly' and flew away to the air.

The giant slammed into the wall, demolishing it.

"Are they trying to take down the entire building?!" Guiche, who landed on the second level seats, said.

"They would get it up and running again with that 'Firstborn Magic' of theirs anyway." Malicorne said while wiping off the cold sweat off his brow.

"Hey, where's Louise?" Colbert said.

"Eh?" Kirche began trying to find Louise anxiously.

She found Louise amidst the dust clouds fogging up her vision.

Louise was standing right behind the giant.

"Miss Vallière, run away!"

"By the way, Louise can't use 'Fly', right?" When she said this, Kirche looked at Louise's expression, and noticed something about her.

No... It was not that she was not able to escape, but simply that she did not want to escape.

With her wand pointed forward, Louise, facing against the giant, raised her head and said, "You won't dare to really kill me, right."

"That's right. If we were to kill you, the undertaker of the work of the devil will revive again anyway. However, even if I don't take you life here, I have plenty of other methods of taking control of your mind and body."

The giant stretched out its hand, ready to take Louise in its grasp.

Just then, Louise activated her spell.

"Explosion!"

A small blast occurs near the chest of the giant, but that was all that happened.

It seems that she has run out of mental will.

"Just.. Just one more time..." Louise tried to chant the 'Void' spell again.

However, it was too late. The giant captured Louise's petite body within its grasp.

"Let go of Louise!"

Guiche chanted spells, and dozens of earthen walls fell on the head of the giant.

Malicorne casted his wind spell and attacked the hand of the giant.

Colbert and Kirche also used Triangle Fire spells.

However, the joint attacks by all four of them failed to penetrate the Elven 'Reflection' magic. Malicorne was even blown away by the reflected spell.

"Ah, Ugh..." Louise struggled within the giant's grasp, but to no avail.

"It seems like you're no longer capable of using the work of the devil."

Turuk's murmurings showed a slight hint of disappointment.

The giant's hand pressed hard, and Louise was so scared that she began to tremble.

"Saito, save me..." Louise could not help but summon the name of her beloved familiar.

However, she immediately bit down on her lip, and stopped her voice from escaping her mouth.

"It's supposed to me saving Saito... How can I even hope that Saito will come and save me?"

However, she was unable to activate Void anymore.

She has just used up all of her mental will just now.

"S-save me!"

Screams of help came. A look below showed that one of Guiche's hands has been taken hold of by the giant. Colbert and Kirche tried to save him, but they were swatted away like insects.

Despair crept further into the core of Louise's soul. She felt so uncomfortable... She could not breath anymore.

If she lost her consciousness here like this, then she would definitely also lose her free will. All the details of the important memories between the both of them would be erased, and she would never meet her beloved Saito ever again.

"Sorry, Saito..."

Just as... Louise was mumbling while her consciousness faded away, Louise discovered a change within herself.

"Eh...?"

A terrifying amount of power blossomed within the very core of Louise's body.

"What... What is this power...?"

Her mental will should have been depleted after she had cast all of the 'Void' spells.

However, why was mental will currently flowing into her body again?

It was as if it flowed from somewhere else.

She felt... a sort of throbbing feeling.

"What's happening? What was, this power?"

Large amount of mental will spilled into Louise's body. They swirled around in her body, trying to find a way to be released from her. If she did not keep her spirits up by 120%, she felt as if her consciousness would be crushed by the sheer amount of power within her.

At the same time, Louise felt that as if she was protected by something strong and powerful.

This was a familiar feeling.

"This feeling, is Saito!"

Louise was very sure of this.

This was Saito's power. Was it the bond between the familiar and her... or something else entirely? She did not fully understand the theory behind this, but in any case, Saito's power had entered her body...

The giant pressed down even hard on Louise, planning to choke her unconscious.

"There's no way I'm letting you do this."

Louise closed her eyes and casted a 'Void' spell.

In the next instant, Louise figure disappeared from the giant's hand.

"What! Impossible!" Turuk shouted out in shock.

The Elven Council members looking down at them from the top also began to make a ruckus.

"Where did she disappear to...!"

"I'm here."

Louise's voice came from a place far away from Turuk's head.

She stood straight on the lighting device that hung from the ceiling.

Using the 'Teleport' spell, she moved to that place in an instant.

"Is the that work of the devil...!"

Louise then pointed her wand towards the bottom and began to chant a spell loudly.

"Eoru Sunu Firu Yarunsaksa...."

"Onu Sunu Uriu Ru Raduo...."

The mental will that was flowing continuously within her... was converted into 'Void' runes, and was concentrated into the tip of her wand.

The high feeling that she had never felt before made Louise feel troubled.

However, she just felt like Saito was beside her... This feeling made Louise feel like there was nothing to be afraid of.

She felt as if she could use any magic she wanted...

"Beozusu Yuru Suwieru Kano Oshiera."

The melody of the runes that she has chanted countless times, interwove as she willed them to be in her mind.

Louise overlooked the stone giant from above.

There was nothing to be afraid of. You're nothing but a lump of normal rock.

"Jera Isa Wunshu Hagaru Beokun Iru...."

The spell was complete.

Louise flicked her wand once.

"Explosion!"

A small dot of light, only the size of a pea, rapidly expanded near the chest of the giant, and exploded.

The 'Explosion' Void spell punctured through the elven 'Reflection', and blasted the ten-mail-tall giant into pieces. What was left of the giant fell into the crater that also appeared in the ground.

"Oh, Louise, she succeeded!" Guiche, who was released from the giant's hands, exclaimed cheerfully.

"Hey, wasn't there still a lot of power left within you? I see, you were saving it for last, right?"

Louise shook her head.

"This was not my own power. It was borrowed from Saito."

"What's that supposed to mean?" Kirche asked with a befuddled expression on her face.

"Ah, this is the work of the devil... Truly a terrifying power to behold." Turuk mumbled with a shocked expression.

Louise then pointed her wand towards the panicking elves.

"Don't move. Or I will give you another shot."

The elves stopped in their tracks when they heard that. If the power of the 'Void' could pass through even 'Reflection', then it was obvious that no matter how strong the 'Firstborn Magic' spell was, it will not be able to deflect another Void spell of the same destructive power.

However, they have other doubts of their own.

A spell as powerful as the one before, could it really be used again?

To tell the truth, Louise was indeed just bluffing. The mental will that has filled her body just now has disappeared without a trace after it was completely used in the the explosion just now.

... Louise and the Elves stood in a face off, divided on two sides by the remains of the giant.

"Mu, has she finally caught up..."

Turuk closed his eyes and said with a voice in a volume nobody could hear.

Just then, the windows at the top of the hall were shattered.

A petite silhouette appeared, and before any of the Elves could react, it flew to Turuk's side with the dexterity of an assassin, and pressed the tip of the staff at his neck.

"Tabitha!" Louise cried out.

"You move, you die."

Tabitha coldly warned Turuk as she pressed her staff on his neck.

Turuk simply held both his hands up in surrender.

"Where is Saito?" Tabitha questioned.

"He's not here."

Turuk shook his head.

"That barbarian has already escaped with the undertaker girl."

"What did you say!"

Chapter 4: Lífprásir

Just as Louise and the others bravely rushed headlong into the Elven stronghold... Saito and Ali attempted with great effort to subdue the ferociously struggling Elven girl who was on the deck.

"Stay down!"

"Ugh... L-Let go of me, you bunch of devils!" Fatima, whose hands were held behind her back by Ali, was squirming like a fish that was hooked on land, while cursing the entire time.

"Let go of me now, or I will..."

"Or you will what?" Ali said coldly.

"Ugh..." Fatima could only bite her lips in frustration.

The Elven 'Firstborn Magic' was indeed far stronger than the magic of the magi, but it cannot be freely used at will anywhere. The elf who had a bond with the spirit of the boat was Ali, so she has no power here.

"I can let you go, but we're right in the belly of the sea, you know?"

"What did you say?" Fatima looked towards the round cabin windows.

Only to find that it was completely dark outside.

"So this is a sea dragon ship, huh..."

"That's right. If you didn't want to be thrown into the sea, shut your mouth."

Fatima finally stopped struggling, and calmed down.

"Does this mean that I'm a hostage?"

"Mm, well, you can say that." Ali said.

"I expected nothing less from a traitor like you to use such despicable measures."

"Whatever you say then, at least I'm better than a zealous fanatic like you."

"Bastard, how dare you insult our party!" Fatima raised her head and bellowed. Her eyes then laid on Tiffania, who was still sleeping on the bed. "Shajal's daughter... Could it be that she was still alive?"

"Yes. And you were actually the one who injured her so heavily." Saito opened his mouth.

"Humph, that was what she deserved anyway."

"What did you say...!"

This made Saito boil in rage. The flames of anger that was barely suppressed flared again in his heart.

"It was her... She was the one who shot Tiffa." Saito stared daggers at Fatima.

"You damned devil, do you hate me? If you do, then just kill me now, it would be better than being insulted by you!"

"You little...!"

Saito looked like he was going to say something, but he stopped just as the words were about to leave his mouth. This was because he noticed that Fatima, who had been putting up a brave face, showed fear in her eyes.

Saito took a deep breath. "No, I won't do that. That will only make Tiffa sad."

If he extracted revenge from an enemy who cannot resist in any way, what is the difference between him and her.

After collecting his composure and stifling his rage, Saito thought of why she would hate Tiffania.

Well, elves and humans have been facing off against each other for eons.

In the eyes of an elf, a half-blood like Tiffania would either be a mongrel or a traitor. Elves who are friendly towards humans like Luctiana are a special case. However, even if that was so, the hatred Fatima had towards Tiffania was too abnormal.

"Hey you, is there some kind of bad blood between you and Tiffania?"

"Bad blood? Of course there is. Do you understand how much pain and

suffering our clan had endure because of the mother of this traitor!"

"Your clan?"

This sentence made Saito understand everything.

"Could it be that you and Tiffania were from the same clan?"

Saito thought of what he had heard from Tiffania about her background.

Tiffania's mother, came to Halkeginia from the land of the elves alone, and became the beloved concubine of an Albion Duke.

"Ah I see, it's because she's Tiffa's relative!"

No wonder they look so similar in appearance.

"That's right. Our clan was banished because of her mother. You would never understand how badly we will be treated if there was a traitor from our clansmen... We were insulted by everyone and banished out of the town, where we were left to wander near the borders of the desert, living a life where we could only drink muddied water!"

Fatima bit her lips so hard that it looks like she was almost going to make herself bleed.

The intense hatred she had, that seemed to have invaded her very core, overwhelmed whatever aura Saito had projected for a brief moment unknowingly.

So that was why... she hated Tiffania so much. That hatred of hers was also probably why she was used by the bastards in the 'Steel-Blooded Party'.

"The act of marriage between an elf and a human in of itself is treason."

Ali said.

"B-but that's not Tiffania's fault, right?"

Fatima's case was understandable. However, that was not related to her daughter, Tiffania. There was no reason for her to carry the crime on behalf of the mother.

"Humph, nobody asked her to be the daughter of a traitor. Her very existence in this world is a crime. I heard that after my aunt ran away, she became the

lover of a noble, and her daughter grew up shamelessly in a world of comfort without knowing what sort of humiliation our clan was forced to go through!"

This made Saito extremely furious.

"You said that Tiffania grew up shamelessly in a world of comfort without knowing any adversity?"

"Stop acting all high and mighty. You know nothing about her at all!"

"What?"

"Do you even understand how difficult it is for elves to live in the land of men? She had to conceal her identity no matter where she went. If she were to accidentally reveal her real self, she would be killed instantly... That is how Tiffania spent her childhood."

"Humph, this is nothing compared to the humiliation our clan faced."

"Tiffania's mother has been killed by the humans."

"What did you say?"

Fatima's sea blue eyes went round instantly when she heard that.

"Tiffa had been living in a country called Albion with her mother, but the identities of both the mother and daughter were discovered by the king. Even though Tiffa's father tried to help them escape, but they still managed to find them... In the end, Tiffa, who could hide in the closet as she trembled in fear, even heard her mother get killed with her own ears."

"Aunt Shajal... is dead?" Fatima mumbled in dazed state.

Just like she was thinking repeatedly about this truth, she kept saying this... before laughing out loud.

"Is that so? She died, huh... Aunt has died... Ha, ha ha, ha... In the end, she fell into the trap she dug herself. She got seduced by pretty words of a barbarian, and got discard like she was nothing to him, isn't this just the perfect way to die for a traitor!"

"You...!"

Just as Saito, who could not resist her malicious words any longer, was about

to say something.

"...T-that's not...true..."

Saito immediately turn back his head at the source of the sound when he heard it.

"Tiffa!"

Tiffania, whose entire body was covered in bandages, tried to prop the upper half of her body up on the bed with great effort. Her chest heaved heavily after she took off the oxygen mask but her eyes were still fixated at Fatima.

"Tiffa! You don't have to get up! You have to lie down..."

Saito instantly rushed to her side and said that when he saw her doing so.

"No, I'm fine... Thank you, Saito." Tiffania shook her head weakly.

"Tell me then, Shajal's daughter, which part of what I said was not true."

Fatima glared resentfully at Tiffania with a pair of vicious eyes.

"Father has always loved Mother."

"That's a lie! How can a barbarian and an elf even really love each other!"

"That's the truth. Elves and humans are able to whole-heartedly understand each other... to the extent of even loving one another. I think that, I, am the perfect proof of that."

As Tiffania said that, she used her hands to hold on the edge of the bed.

"Ugh..."

"Tiffa, I told you to stop moving around!"

Saito hurried to support Tiffania, who was on the verge of falling off the bed.

"D-don't worry... This isn't, too bad..." Tiffa shook her head. She moved her body off the bed slowly, and knelt on the ground.

"... Ouch... Ugh..."

"Tiffa!"

"What are you trying to do...?" Fatima asked, unsure of her intention of doing

so.

"Nevertheless, in the end... It is an undeniable fact that your clansmen were forced to suffer because Mother broke the law. As her daughter, I should be apologizing in Mother's place... Please forgive us." Tiffania lowered her head after she said this while panting heavily.

"Wha...!"

However, this only made Fatima so angry that her eyes went wide and her teeth rattled in rage.

"Doing this now... Did you really think that doing this now would absolve yourselves of the responsibility of every sort of humiliation my clansmen felt!"

Fatima heaved and escaped Ali's hold on her as she lunged towards Tiffania.

"Stop!"

However, Saito reacted quickly and immediately caught her before suppressing her hard on the ground.

"Dammit... Let go of me, you devil!"

"Like hell I will!"

Saito pressed on Fatima's struggling arms tightly, while Ali seems to be chanting something as he placed his hands on Fatima's head.

Just then...

The 'anomaly' happened to Saito's body.

"...E-eh?"

Saito felt the weird feeling of having all his power siphoned out of his body.

Hypothermia followed as Saito felt his muscles shiver uncontrollably on their own.

Before he could even think about saying "Eh...?" in his mind, Saito's body has already fallen to the ground limply.

"...What's this? What happening to me?"

His first thought was that Fatima did something to him.

However, it did not seem so since she has already lost consciousness. Maybe Ali made her fall asleep with 'Firstborn Magic'.

What was this feeling of exhaustion...?

"Hey, what happened, barbarian." Ali noticed something strange with Saito, and asked him as he placed his palm on Saito's shoulder.

"Saito?" Tiffania also asked out of worry.

However, Saito almost could not hear anything the both of them said.

As if he fell down into a bottomless abyss, Saito felt an intense migraine as strength slip out of his body.

He could feel that he was losing body heat and turning cold. Nevertheless, in spite of his ice cold body, he could feel that there was some place somewhere on his body that burned intensely.

The chest... My chest, feels like it was going up in flames!

"What...is, this...!"

The burning sensation emanating from his chest turned into pain, making Saito claw at this chest frantically.

"Saito, your chest is glowing!" Tiffania yelled out.

"W-what...did you...say...?"

Saito looked down at his chest.

Under his jacket, the eerie glyphs, glowing sky blue, were shining brightly.

"Is this the runes of a familiar?"

Just then, Tiffania suddenly realized something. She thought about when she casted the 'Summon Servant' spell in the 'Dragon's Nest', and made a contract with Saito to make him her familiar.

"However, this isn't right... Isn't Saito already Louise's familiar?"

"A double contract... I have become your familiar too, Tiffania."

Saito answered while panting heavily, his whole body sweating profusely.

"How, how did this happen... W-what should I do..."

Tiffania's face went chalk white because she was incredibly shocked.

The glowing runes carved onto Saito's chest gradually increased in intensity.

"Ah, ah, aaah..."

Tortured by the acute pain on his chest, Saito could only writhe in pain on the ground.

It's not only the pain coursing through his entire body... The power within his body was also being siphoned away. However, it was not just a simple case of losing his strength, but it was more like the feeling that his very core, his own existence was brutally torn apart before it was taken away from him.

Dammit, will I... lose my life here?

Will I just die here, before I even get to meet Louise...

"What the heck... Dammit, partner, have you really turned into 'that'!"

Suddenly, Saito heard someone around him say this.

Saito jolted awake, and saw that the voice came from the katana that was leaning by the wall.

"Derf....?"

Saito called out this name amidst his hazy consciousness.

His partner, who had been silent all along, finally awoken.

"Derf... What... What do you mean by 'that'...?" Saito asked, out of breath.

"Partner, calm down, and listen to me clearly. The glowing runes on your chest, are the runes of the Lífþrasir."

"Líf... þra... s... ir?"

"It's the last familiar. Lífþrasir will use its own life to channel power into the bearers of the void." Derflinger said.

"W-What is that... So you mean that... The reason why I felt exhausted, was because my life was being used?"

"That's right... Using the life force of Lífþrasir, the bearers who have made a contract with Lífþrasir, would be able to continuously cast powerful 'Void' spells

even if they did not use their mental will. In other words, partner's body has turned into a 'magic power supply'."

"No way..."

Hearing this, Saito could not help but feel goosebumps on his skin.

He has become the 'magic power supply' for the bearers of the Void. In other words, this familiar was completely different from Gandálfr, Vindálfr or Mjööðvitnir, it was an existence that consumed its own life force for its master... He would have never thought that the power of the last familiar, would be something this scary.

... And yet if this was true, there were some things that cannot be explained.

"However, Tiffa, isn't even using any Void spells at all..."

"There is another bearer of the Void, that has made a contract with partner."

"Would that person be Louise?"

"Yes, that's right. Partner was originally the familiar of the pink-haired miss, and even if you make a contract with another, the original contract with that pink-haired miss will not disappear."

When Tiffania heard this, she instantly burst into tears.

"Saito, I'm terribly sorry. It's my fault, I made you my familiar, and cause this to you..."

"No... This isn't Tiffa's fault."

Saito tried his best to console her.

After hearing what Derflinger had said, Saito finally understood something.

... By the way, if Louise was using the 'Void', wouldn't this mean that she was in the midst of a serious crisis?

The spells she is using now, certainly was not just normal magic. It was to the extent of having to consume the life force of Saito, the magic power supply, Lífprasir. What she needed now, was definitely large amounts of mental will.

"If that's the case, then it's fine..."

His consciousness fading away as exhaustion claimed his body, Saito thought.

As he was now, Saito knew that he was unable to rush to Louise's side and protect her as Gandálfr. However, if this power could save Louise, then the result would be the same, so Saito thought, "This is fine"...

His consciousness faded even further...

The intense pain that burned his chest also gradually lessened.

However, that may just be that his body has gone numb to the pain...

"Mr. Derf, what should we do? If this continues, Saito will die!" Tiffania yelled, as she was in tears.

"Calm down, elf girl. Partner is okay for now."

"Huh?"

"Even if his life force was taken away, he should be able to weather through one or two 'Void' spells."

"Hey, what's going on now? I don't understand what you've said at all." Ali said, confused.

"Partner, you have to hold on. It shouldn't last long."

"Even if you say that..."

Just as Saito fell to the ground moaning...

Suddenly, Saito felt as if someone was holding his head gently.

"Tiffa...?"

Tiffa used her thin arms to hug Saito's head lightly. At the same time, on the other hand, her pair of unbelievably bouncy large breasts the size of honey melons, were pressed into Saito's face.

If it was the normal Saito, then he would definitely feel his heart thump at the touch of those breasts. However, Saito currently had no energy to even increase his heartbeat. Nevertheless, the soft feeling of the warm breasts against him made him feel that peace he had been longing for.

If he could only just plant his face into Tiffania's breast...

Not long after that, the runes on his chest stopped glowing and that feeling of exhaustion also disappeared.

"Saito, are you okay now?" Tiffania asked, worried.

"Yeah, I'm alright... It should be okay for me now."

After Tiffania slowly let go of her arms, Saito lay down on the ground limply.

"The heck is 'Lífþrasir'... You've never even mentioned it even once to me." Saito grumbled at Derflinger.

"Sorry, partner. I woke up a little too late." Derflinger apologized to Saito regretfully.

"Hey, what exactly happened? Explain the details to me, could you?"

Just as Ali, who was the only one on board that did not know what was going on, came and ask them about it.

They heard a huge explosion, and the ship rocked violently.

"Ya...!"

Tiffania, who had lost her balance, fell on the floor.

The explosions and tremors continued on and on without stopping.

"What was it this time?"

"This is bad, we got discovered by the navy marshal's ships." Ali couldn't help but yelp in surprise.

"What did you say?"

"They're attacking us with depth charges, a Elven magical weapon that explodes whenever there's a vibration."

"Captain, the navy is onto us!" Idris and Madalf rushed into the cabin and said.

"Dammit, are they trying to sink this ship along with the hostage?" Ali lowered his head to look at Fatima on the ground and said angrily.

The 'Steel-Blooded Party' did not seem to care if she was dead or not.

"Captain, what should we do?" Idris asked Ali for further instructions.

Ali gritted his teeth in frustration. They were not able to return fire at all, because this 'Sea Dragon Ship' was not outfitted with any battle gear, so it could never fight off the 'Whale Dragon Ships'.

"We have no other choice than to escape at full speed."

"Is that even possible? They are the navy, you know?"

"We'll never know if we don't try anyway."

"That just impossible. Calm down, you guys."

A cool voice came from somewhere.

Everyone turned to look at the source of the sound.

"Luctiana!" Ali shouted.

It was Luctiana, who had been unconscious like Tiffania.

Propping her upper body on the bed, Luctiana said as she twirled her golden locks of hair.

"Seriously. How am I supposed to sleep peacefully with this racket."

"Luctiana, is it okay for you to get up?" Worried about Luctiana, Ali asked.

"Now is not the time to get worried about that." Luctiana answered, her face distorted by the pain.

"It's impossible for us to escape from the navy like this, why don't we just leave the ship?"

"Are you planning to swim to shore? That's too dangerous."

"It's better than being blasted to the sea bed."

Just then, they heard another round of explosions, and the ship shook violently again.

"Yeah, maybe you're right..."

Having said that, Ali nodded his head, as if he made up his mind on something, and looked at Saito.

"Barbarian, can you carry the half-blood on your back and swim to shore?"

"Sure, no problem..." Saito, still dazed, stood and said.

The feeling of exhaustion has almost left him. The weird thing was, after some time, Saito found out that not much of his strength was gone.

Does this mean that instead of his strength, something else was taken away from him... Saito shook his head as he thought of this.

Anyway... With the power of Gandálfr and Elven magic, there is a high probability that he would be able to carry Tiffania and swim out of here.

"Alright, that's it then. Abandon ship."

After taking the president of the Elven Council, Turuk, hostage, Louise and the others immediately turned back towards the 'Ostland'. Up till they left the hall, Louise and the others were surrounded by the hostile stares of the elves, making Guiche and the others shake their legs in fear.

"Hey, Malicorne, we'll be alright, right?"

"Who knows."

Kirche said to Tabitha who had been walking forward as she pressed her wand into Turuk's throat.

"Tabitha, this is a huge accomplishment!"

"That's not it."

"Huh?"

"I'll explain it to you later."

Kirche was momentarily confused at what Tabitha had said indifferently.

"Can't you walk a little slower?" Kirche said, as she pointed her wand at Turuk's back.

"Seriously, you are really barbaric."

"We'll let you go if you can bring us to where Saito is." Louise said.

"So then, where is the 'Dragon's Nest' that Saito and the other were heading?"

"It's pretty far from here, but I would say the both of them aren't there anymore."

"What's that supposed to mean?" Louise glared at Turuk as she questioned him.

"I heard that the Navy has bombed the 'Dragon's Nest'."

"What did you say!" Louise hurriedly asked Turuk when she heard that.

"Didn't you say that you wouldn't kill the bearer of the Void?"

"It wasn't under the Council's orders. The 'Steel-Blooded Party' did that on their own."

"The 'Steel-Blooded Party'?"

"They are the war-advocating faction of the Council that also controls the navy, a force that wouldn't hesitate to go into a full fledged war with the barbarians. Naturally, they aren't afraid of the devil's revival."

"Hm, they might even have sunk to the bottom of the sea." Having said that, Turuk shook his head.

"If that's the case, then I'll never let you guys go."

Even though she heard this, Louise did not lose her calm.

This was because there was something she staunchly believed in.

"Saito was still alive."

Just as she chanted the Void spell, a mysterious power flowed into her body... She felt certain of Saito's existence through that power.

Even if he was far away from me, Saito still came to my aid...

"Kyui kyui! Big sister you guys are back!"

Slyphid called out to them as they crawled onto the deck of the Ostland, which was stuck in the middle of the large tower after it rammed into the walls.

"Miss Vallière! A-ah, this is great... You guys are all safe!"

After everyone climbed past the stairs into the ship, Siesta immediately hugged Louise.

"N-no, don't be like this..."

Louise pushed Siesta away with a bright red face.

After looking around at everyone's faces, Siesta asked with a confused face,
"Um, may I ask, where is Saito and Miss Westwood?"

"They aren't here. I heard that they escaped long ago."

"Escaped... To where?"

"I don't know. But it seems the elven army are in pursuit of them."

"That's horrible..."

Siesta could not help but cry out in surprise.

"It's nothing, right? They are going to be okay, aren't they?"

"Don't worry. Saito's still alive."

Louise said as she placed both of her hands on Siesta's shoulders.

"How would you know?"

"I would know, because Saito's my familiar." Louise puffed out her tiny chest, and proclaimed with confidence.

Truth be told, even if Louise said this, Siesta still could not feel relieved... However, seeing as to how confident Louise is, she felt just that tiny spark of hope.

"Understood. I believe in Miss Vallière."

Just as everyone was walking on the tilted ship corridors, Éléonore walked out to meet them, her white robe full of coal powder. She looked at them with wide eyes when she saw Turuk, who was escorted by their wands on board the ship.

"This is surprising. I'd never have thought you really take an elf hostage."

"Can the ship move, miss Éléonore?" Colbert asked.

"Yes, barely. However, the steam engine isn't really stable at the moment."

"Let's just try our best. Even though our stockpile of 'wind stones' is also a little worrying..."

"Mr. Colbert, let's hurry to the 'Dragon's Nest'." Louise prodded.

Just then.

"That wouldn't be right." Turuk suddenly spoke.

"Huh, what do you mean?" Kirche spoke as her eyes narrowed into a line.

"You have to bring me to the barbarian representative."

"What did you say?"

Hearing Turuk's request, Louise and the others did not know how to respond.

"Before I explain myself, can you all please put away those dangerous weapons of yours? Ha!"

Everyone's wands flew far away just as he gave out a shout.

"What... You!"

"Don't be so guarded. I let you capture me on purpose."

"Eh...?"

Everyone present was confused.

Only Tabitha remained impassive.

"The stone 'Golem' was really impressive, wasn't it? However, if I really wanted to defeat you, there are even more cleverer ways of doing it. I could have just used 'Inferno' and burn all of you to crisp cinders."

Turuk showed his tongue cheekily, as if he was boasting about the tricks he had shown just now.

"Wh-what does this mean?"

"I had this Gallian princess help me, put on a show."

The person who answered, was a young elven man who appeared in the ship cabin out of nowhere.

Everyone had a deep impression of this elf.

"Y-you were at Alhambra...!"

That's right. He was the one assisting the previous Gallian king Joseph, and

made the lives of Louise and the others who went to save Tabitha difficult, Bidashal.

"This was all just a show... Is this true, Tabitha?"

Hearing Kirche's inquiry, Tabitha nodded.

"Mr. Elven President, what is this supposed to mean."

Colbert asked, as he shot Turuk a severe glare.

"I have no intention of playing out some covert plan. I am here, because I want to seek peace with you."

"What?!"

Everyone was dumbfounded as they heard this.

"Of course, in the case of a total war between both sides, us elves will naturally be victorious. However, if you use 'the Work of the Devil', then we'll no doubt have heavy casualties of our own. And so no matter what, I want to prevent this meaningless war from happening on this Saharan desert."

"Then why don't you do that from the start then, aren't you the highest ranked elf?"

Hearing Louise say that, Turuk shook his head helplessly.

"I am but the representative of the council, so I don't have end-all-be-all executive powers like a barbarian king. Also, most of the council members, will not agree to a truce with the barbarians. Not to mention the 'Steel-Blooded Party' clamoring for war with the barbarians and their antics."

"And thus the Council must not know what we are doing." Bidashal opened his mouth to speak.

"Oh, in that case, you really want peace between both sides, don't you?" Colbert wanted to confirm their intentions again.

"I'm not sure about that yet, but I have to know what the representative of Halkeginia thinks about it. I have to confirm the reason why he would want to find the 'Devil's Gate', or what you call the 'Holy Land'."

"Ah, this, is really unexpected... I could only say thank the Founder."

Colbert could not help but express his gratitude towards the Founder's blessing.

They rushed kamikaze into the Elven tower, and it brought an unexpected result.

If they were able to have Turuk talk to the Pope in Romania, then maybe they could prevent an all-out war with the elves.

"H-however, now we have to find Saito." Just then, Louise said something different.

"That's right, aren't Saito and the others being pursued?" Siesta concurred with Louise's opinion.

However, Turuk shook his head. "That is nigh impossible. Finding a person in the sea, is as hard as finding a gold nugget in the desert. We should ratify the peace treaty as soon as possible and stop the 'Steel-Blooded Party' in their tracks to improves the chances of saving your friends."

"W-well, that is true..."

What Turuk had said was rational.

Louise had nothing to refute his argument.

Colbert then advised Louise, "Miss Vallière, I understand that you're anxious about him, but we don't have enough wind-stones in the ship, so we couldn't fly too far in this situation. We could barely return to Gallia as of now."

"I understand..."

Louise finally nodded somberly after hearing Colbert has said.

Chapter 5: Break-Out

There was hardly a break in the Elf fleet's depth charge attack.... Saito's group had no choice but to abandon ship and run for their lives.

After the boat avoided the depth charges, and barely made it into the bay, the group immediately used the 'underwater breathing' enchantment on everyone in the boat and escaped.

The bed-ridden Tiffania and Luctiana were carried out on Ali and Saito's back as they swam out.

Fatima, still under the effect of the sleep enchantment, was carried out on Madalf's shoulder. Originally, Ali's people suggested leaving her to die on the ship, but gave up on the idea at Tiffania's request.

Idris, bringing up the rear, finally left after stuffing as many of the 'weapons' [waterproof automatic pistols, hand grenades, bazookas] they brought from the Holy Land that he could into a travel bag.

The sea dragon Shallar, who had pulled the ship to here, was released back to the sea by Ali. You could just see the lonely expression on Ali's face as his eyes followed the gradually receding silhouette of the carefree Shallar into the sea.

Just as Saito's group escaped the ship, the sea dragon ship took a direct hit from a depth charge, and the wreckage sank to the bottom of the sea.

Afterward, the group swam for several hundred miles, and after climbing on the beach, immediately hid in a cave concealed by reef rocks.

The cave walls had the mark of water on them, and it could be seen that this place would be submerged in seawater at high tide. Saito did his best to find a dry spot, and gently placed Tiffania on the ground.

"Oh...."

"Tiffa, it's nothing."

"Uhh, because Saito is by my side."

Tiffania smiled, trying her best to maintain an optimistic expression.

Saito's heart suddenly skipped a beat.

The soaked traditional Elven clothes, that were closely stuck to Tiffania's soft body, immediately revealed her curves... as well as being transparent, and clearly exposing her chest. Moreover, you could clearly see everything. Saito promptly shook his head, as if it was that time already. Was he still daydreaming?

"Sorry, you don't need to say anything." Saito said as he held Tiffania's hand.

"Saito, has the pain already gone away?"

"Eh? Oh, yes...."

Having heard the question, Saito elaborated on his answer.

"The light from the 'Lífprasir' mark has already extinguished. Also, now the strange feeling like my life is being sucked out by something is gone."

"Don't worry, this pain is probably just a side effect of becoming a familiar. At the time I became Louise's familiar, it also hurt a whole lot."

"But Derf said, that it would take your life...."

"Oh, indeed a little of my strength was taken, but now it isn't an issue."

Saito rotated his arm, brandishing it for Tiffania to see.

Thinking about it, although he used Gandálfr's power, he was still able to swim and carry Tiffania all the way here on his back. In fact, it's possible that the mark didn't consume too much of his strength.

"Whatever. If you think about it, this ability really is quite convenient."

Lífprasir's ability is to take the power of the familiar's life, change and add it to the master's magical power. If Saito becomes a magic generator, then there will be no need to worry about Louise overusing her magic power and collapsing.

If this can reduce Louise's burden, naturally it's a good thing.

Saito viewed this matter quite optimistically.

"Yes, very good...."

After Tiffania's quietly relieved voice stopped, she closed her eyes and went to sleep.

On the other side of the cave, Ali chanted Firstborn magic, and started a little fire.

"I caused you a bit of trouble, Ali."

Luctiana weakly said from the rock she was laying on.

"Therefore, I have also become a traitor to the Elves, and it's possible that there is no way for me to again set foot in the Sahara for the rest of my life."

"I'm truly sorry. But perhaps the barbarian's world isn't all that bad."

"Ai, detestable... every time you get into trouble, there's no way I can leave you."

Seeing the interaction of those two, Saito suddenly reminisced about the times he bickered with Louise.

He really understood Ali's mood, and always thought that Luctiana and Louise were very similar. Not just being flat-chested, but their personalities were also very similar.

"Although I'm also always ordered around by Louise, but also similarly obedient to her."

Thinking like this, in the beginning he really disliked this Elven youth, but now he discovered that he couldn't help but feel the beginning of a certain closeness to him.

At that time, Madalf, who first went to use 'Far Sight' magic to check on the naval vessels, returned.

According to him, there was a total of four naval vessels chasing them, and they were still continuously attacking the already abandoned Sea Dragon Boat wreck with depth charges at present.

"They apparently have yet to discover that we have already escaped."

"If this represents their belief, that we really went down with the ship, is a

good thing."

"Aishmail can't be that naïve, he would notice right away."

Hearing Saito's words, Ali shook his head.

"Aishmail?"

"He's the leader of the Steel-Blooded Party, and he's virtually in charge of the navy. In the end they exist to kill demons, regardless if we're alive, they won't relax until they've found our bodies.

"Meaning this isn't a good place to stay for long."

"Correct, if they follow the coastline and thoroughly search while they advance, it's over. Moreover, as soon as it's high tide, this place will be submerged in water."

"Also, there's no way to get proper medical treatment here."

Idris stated this. Indeed, although Tiffania and Luctiana had regained consciousness, they were still severely injured.

"The town you called Eumenes, is it far from here?"

"The distance from here is about 30 leagues."

"Quite distant...."

In the end, we'll have to cross the blisteringly hot desert. Carrying two severely injured people and having to go that far, was really quite harsh.

"I'll use some of the sand in the vicinity to make a 'doll' to carry them. However, this will take some time."

Ali headed towards the beach.

"Be careful not to be discovered by the naval vessels."

Luctiana reminded Ali from behind him.

At this moment Saito was leaning his back against the cave wall.

Then Saito pulled Derflinger from his scabbard, and in a quiet voice asked, "Hey, Derf."

"What"

This time Derflinger immediately responded to Saito.

"Currently I'm the familiar of Louise and Tiffania at the same time, this is a double contract, correct?"

"Correct."

"There is such a thing."

"One magician only can use one familiar... Is it not a big deal to break this rule?"

"This I really don't know. But I remember that Sasha was also this way."

"Sasha also?"

"Eh, Mjöllvitnir and Vindálfr were separated into different people. But Gandálfr, and that... Lífprasir, yet both were Sasha's... they ought to be."

Sasha...? Saito recalled the previous dream he had at the Cathedral of Romalia. The Sasha and Brimir he saw in that dream looked like they were on good terms with each other.

"Derf, you said 6000 years ago, Sasha killed Brimir, correct? Is it related to this matter?"

"Who knows?"

"What's with these wishy washy answers?"

"Uh, me as well, I don't know what happened, I really don't know. Only, it must have been a very sad event. Probably, nothing could be done, you know... eh, sorry, I'm at my limit. If we continue further, it seems like my consciousness will become foggy, or something of the sort."

"Would that be Sasha's spell that you spoke about?"

"Sorry, partner, I can't help you."

"That's not your fault."

Derflinger is a sword magically created by Sasha. Most of these matters are detrimental to Sasha. Thus, in cases when Derflinger wants to speak, this starts a strange 'Brake', and though this isn't the situation that Derflinger desires, it makes it so he can't speak.

"For now let's not talk about this... you actually have a more immediate problem."

"Huh?"

"It goes like this, the matter of you and Miss Half-Elf kissing, little Miss Pink is going to find out."

"Ah...."

Hearing this, Saito had no choice but to break out in a cold sweat of fear. This is really bad... really really bad.

Lowering his head, Saito looked at the sleeping Tiffania, drawn by the cute sound of her breathing.

And her huge chest, as well as her totally soft lips, all slowly moving to the sound of her breathing.

Unable to forgive or control his arousal, Saito smacked his head. I really am an idiot... didn't I swear not to do this again, to not make Louise sad again?

But even though that was the case, Saito was well aware of the fact that when he kissed Tiffania, the kiss wasn't simply a kiss to complete the familiar contract. Similarly, Saito could pretty much guess the feelings of Tiffania at the time she cast Summon Familiar... thinking about those that couldn't be returned to Tiffania, there's no way his heart wouldn't ache for her.

"Derf, what should I do...?"

"It's tough being a popular guy, huh?"

"It's not nice to act like this doesn't concern you...."

At that time, Ali returned from outside the cave.

"Preparations are complete, let's go."

Ali brought along a large 'Sand Doll'. The Sand Doll, which could change its form freely, extended two large hands, capable of carrying Tiffania and Luctiana.

"Hey, what should we do with this woman?"

Madalf asked, looking at Fatima, still under the influence of the sleep spell.

"Find a spot to leave her, someone will find her eventually."

Idris said.

"No. If she's found by someone, you can be sure the Steel-Blooded Party will find out about us."

But Ali opposed this.

"Let's take her with us for now, we still can't say she has no value as a hostage."

The Sand Doll extended a third arm and picked up Fatima.

Thus, Saito's group set out for the free city of Eumenes.

And then, a little earlier...

The military forces from Romalia, Gallia, Germana and Tristain that made up the 'Coalition Army for the Restoration of the Holy Lands'. The army of each nation, under the leadership of their rulers, advanced on the Sahara.

The Coalition Army forces were composed of the reorganized former Albion fleet, as well as Halkeginia's strongest dragon knight corps, the Grand Duchy of Guldenhorf's 'Aerial Armor Brigade'. Of course, every country wasn't in the best situation to deploy troops. Gallia's dual-use fleet was practically destroyed, and Tristain and Germanian forces were also exhausted from all of their previous fighting. Only Romalia, that had prepared their army in secret for the Holy War, were able to prepare their army satisfactorily.

That being said, since this time they faced an unprecedented threat, all the nations of Halkeginia joined together in the end.

The 'Coalition Army for the Restoration of the Holy Lands' that set out from Gallia, set up camp on the outskirts of the city of Alhambra.

Previously, Saito's group had rescued Tabitha and her mother from this town, situated on the border of Gallia and the Sahara desert.

This was originally a town built by the elves, but almost 1000 years earlier, it was captured by the bitter sacrifice of Holy Land Restoration Army (Crusaders).

Afterwards, a great many more battles were fought, however, it was this place with interesting history that had finally determined the border.

Facing it, a vast desert is spread out before it.

This was the final resupply base on the way to the Sahara.

The light of dawn shown off the clouds, illuminating the beautiful city of Alhambra. The geometric shapes decorated the walls, just as they had come from the walls' original owners, from the hands of the elves.

Henrietta, guarded by Agnes, entered the city.

What met their eyes were the ruins of the main entrance hall. This was the scar left by the battle between Saito's group and the elf, Bidashal, during the rescue of Tabitha and her mother.

Henrietta went up the stairs, and arrived at the door to a particular worship room on the top floor of the castle.

She wanted to directly persuade the pope, and try again, in order to avoid war.

"Agnes, wait here."

After paying her respects, Agnes immediately assumed an erect and immobile position.

In front of the worship room door stood two Templar Knights.

"Why, if it isn't Queen Henrietta."

"Is the Pope in?"

Hearing Henrietta's question, the Templar responded with a look of terror: "The Pope is currently alone praying, no-one can enter currently."

"Really? Then I'll just wait here."

Thus Henrietta stood in front of the door, leaving the Templar not sure what to do.

"But...."

At that time.

"It's not a problem, please come in."

A voice came from inside the worship room.

"Your Holiness, but...."

"It's not a problem, please let her enter."

After hearing what was said, the two Templars looked at each other, finally opened the door, and let Henrietta enter.

The dark interior of the worship room was lit by only a few tiny rays of light. As soon as Henrietta entered the worship room, Vittorio revealed an earnest smile.

"Your Holiness, may I ask what you're praying for?"

"I pray that we're able to find Saito-dono and Ms. Westwood, and that true peace can descend on Halkeginia."

"I shall also pray for this wish."

Facing forward, Henrietta knelt beside the Pope. However, while praying with her eyes closed, Henrietta's mind was thinking of other matters.

'What was the Pope actually praying for'

Of course, the answer to that question was the Founder, Brimir.

'But it shouldn't only be that....'

This young Pope was a simple devout believer in Brimir. Yet he also wasn't only interested in worldly ambitions, like the Germanian emperor.

What was the motivation driving him? Was it the belief of a follower of Brimir, to succeed in the mission of the Founder's will, or was it some other matter?

After finishing praying, Henrietta faced Vittorio.

"We still haven't found a trace of Saito-dono, or Ms. Tiffania."

"Yes, it's a pity."

Vittorio calmly shook his head.

"But we're already dispatched highly skilled people to seek them out. Please

be at ease."

"How can I be at ease?"

If a Bearer of the Void is in the hands of the elves, it would be better to directly kill them, since finding a new bearer was much easier... at least, that was how Romalia thought.

But this thought, Henrietta could only keep to herself.

"How many sacrifices will this 'Holy War' create in the end?"

"I'm also unsure. Although you can be sure the sacrifice we'll pay is appropriately disastrous, it's necessary. After all, if Halkeginia is destroyed, the people will also not be able to live.

"It seems that his Holiness isn't worried by this in the least."

Henrietta said, dripping with sarcasm. In a sense, she even envied this person in front of her, that could make the 'right' decision and not feel troubled by it at all.

"Because this is my mission."

"I have already sent many soldiers to their deaths, and even my closest friends and family."

In the war started by Albion, Henrietta caused many people to sacrifice their lives, and to this day she is still deeply troubled by it. Is this war truly right? Didn't she just want revenge on those people who killed Prince Wales...?

"Your Majesty, do you feel regret?"

"I don't know."

Henrietta calmly shook her head.

"But, if I speak of regret, then I feel very sorry for those officers and soldiers that died. Does your Holiness have these kinds of regrets?

"Regrets... yes."

Saying this, Vittorio looked down at the relic of his mother's, the "Ruby of Fire".

"Since I serve as the Pope, I'm absolutely not allowed the feeling of 'regret'."

In that moment, it seemed like an opportunity to peek into the emotions hidden in the depths of the heart of this young Pope, but Henrietta had no way to truly see his heart.

"Your Holiness, I still believe there can be peace with the Elves."

"Of course, through communication, a peaceful solution to the matter would be ideal. However, our counterparts aren't necessarily willing."

"Ah, I know. but reclaiming the 'Holy Land', can this truly save Halkeginia?"

The objective of the 'Coalition Army for the Restoration of the Holy Lands' was to retrieve the 'Magical Equipment' to prevent the continent from rising. But Henrietta felt several doubts she couldn't ignore about what the Pope said about the magical equipment found in the Holy Lands.

This man is still concealing some major secrets.

"This is what I believe, Your Majesty."

The Pope responded in this way, with an earnest expression that didn't change during the entire conversation.

After Henrietta left the worship room...the beautiful youth with heterochromatic eyes entered the room like a shadow, the two people just missing each other as they passed.

The person entering the room was Julio, with an owl standing on his shoulder.

"The messengers report that they are in the outskirts of Adyl, in battle with the Elven fleet. Ms. Valliere appeared to use the Void, and crushed the fleet."

"Are they alright?"

"That still is a little unclear."

"Indeed..."

According to reports from secret agents in Adyl, Saito and Tiffania had already escaped Kasbah. And the likelihood for Louise and the others to meet them was very low, but if they could find Saito, of course, that would be the best result....

Vittorio placed his hand on the mirror located on the alter.

"'The Founder's Round Mirror' produced an omen... The fourth familiar has finally appeared."

Upon hearing this news, a pained look passed across Julio's face, but he immediately resumed his calm expression.

"It's really him."

"Ah, it is truly ironic. He was summoned by love, but bears the cruelest fate."

Vittorio stood for a while next to the window where light was coming into the room, singing the Founder's song.

The left hand of God is Gandálfr, the ferocious shield of the lord. His left hand wields a large sword and his right hand wields a long spear, protecting me with endless vigilance.

The right hand of God is Vindálfr, the kind-hearted flute of the lord. He dominates all beasts of life, leading me through earth, sky, and water.

The mind of God is Mjöðvitnir, the book that carries the crystallization of thought. It carries all knowledge and provides advice whenever I am in need.

There was one more person, but remembering its name gives me trouble...

Taking the four disciples, I came to this land...

"The final familiar, Lífprasir, otherwise known as 'The Heart of God', will complete the four users and four familiars to create the "Founder's Void".

"How much life does he have left?"

"The four users and four familiars are already all present, there shouldn't be much left."

"How regrettable"

Saying this, Julio couldn't help tightly biting his lip.

"I really like him. I... truly wish to become friends with him."

This was the truth, with no pretenses.

Julio thought, although this line sounded cliché, if their positions were different...

"But he is a world saving hero, he will receive eternal praise."

"The same as the name of the saint, yes?"

"Yes, the same as the 'Saint' whom he loves."

Chapter 6: The Free City of Eumenes

After walking for several hours across the desert, with the sun blazing overhead, Saito's group finally arrived at the free city of 'Eumenes'

From the bay that could be seen from outside the city, you could see several masts. Thanks to it being located right on the border between East and West, while it was among the cities of the xenophobic Elves, it was the only successful trade city between Halkeginia and the eastern world's Rub' al Khali.

The solid stone wall surrounding the city appeared to be several hundred years old, with the remnants of the war with Halkeginian forces on it. Camel caravans, loaded with goods, were lined up at the main gate in the city wall.

There weren't only Elves, but humans were also present.

"Oh, there really is interaction with humanity. Although it's a free city, originally it seemed that it would be a little more low-key.

"It's only that this place is relatively special. This city was originally a place of banishment for elves."

The surprised Saito responded to Luctiana being carried by the 'doll'

"Banishment?"

"Correct, this is the place that those who violate tribal law will end up."

In the time it took to reach the city gate, Luctiana told Saito the situation in Eumenes.

In Elven eyes, this far-flung part of the Sahara Desert had been abandoned by 'The Great Will', thus those elves who previously had committed crimes were banished to this region.

As a matter of course, Elves of the desert loath the residents of this city, and had not been in contact with them for a long time. In order to survive in this

isolated region, the residents were forced to interact with Halkeginian barbarians... and apparently, that is the history of this city.

"Although banishment is a matter from long ago... up until present, the residents of the desert seldom approach this place."

Thus spoke Ali.

After arriving at the city gate, the 'doll' immediately collapsed, returning to the sand it was originally composed of. The contract with the desert spirits apparently ended here.

"We're not escaped criminals? We can enter the city?"

"We have Bidashal's pass, there should be no need to worry."

Hearing Saito's worried question, Ali responded.

"Moreover, the Council shouldn't have released the news that you've escaped yet. The Council definitely wouldn't want to lose face for having let a descendant of the demon escape.

Ali, pulling out the pass, said a few words to the guard at the gate, and returned after not too long.

"We got permission. First, we'll head to a hospital that Luctiana knows."

Saito carried Tiffania, who was passed out because of the heat, on his back. Ali carried Luctiana, and Madalf carried Fatima, still under the sleep enchantment. Idris used both hands to carry the travel bag full of Brimir's weapons.

The main street of Eumenes was permeated by a lively atmosphere. Unlike Tristain's Magic Academy, or the elf capital of Adyl, there was an exotic feel to it.

There were many shops on both sides of the street, the kind that sold handicrafts, as well as metal and fine jewelry. At that time they passed a delicious aroma, coming from a shop still cooking pork skewers, as well as a candy shop. The atmosphere was very festival-like.

Many of the peddlers selling goods appeared to be human merchants. In spite of this being an Elven city, they were naturally integrated here. Halkeginia

people, who clearly are scared to death of elves, linked to elves who also view humanity as barbarians.

"What... so basically we don't need to fight."

Saito unconsciously said. He obviously knew that the problem wasn't that simple. But the scene in front of his eyes couldn't help but fill a man full of this kind of hope.

"It's here."

Luctiana said from Ali's back.

The hospital that Luctiana knew of was located in a plaza that the road merged into. It was a two story building painted with white plaster, and various kinds of plant leaves were drawn on the sign.

"Then let's stop here."

Idris put the travel bag on the floor, and Madalf set the deeply sleeping Fatima on the wall next to the entrance.

"Ah, you two have done well."

Ali praised the two as he set down Luctiana.

"You want to say goodbye here?"

Thus asked Saito.

"Ah. Originally, it was only Luctiana and I that were supposed to go to the country of barbarians. Besides, the fewer travelers, the better."

"This is how it is. Although we're all escaped criminals, the punishment for me won't be as severe as for you as the team leader. We just need to hide and wait for events to progress, Lord Bidashal will probably try and help."

Madalf stated.

"Well, thank you. For helping us."

Saito expressed his thanks to Ali's two subordinates. Although these elves kidnapped Saito and Tiffania, they were still the ones that saved his life.

"This wasn't for you, but for our team leader."

Madalf groaned.

"This is just a temporary goodbye, you should be careful of the pursuit by the 'Steel-Blooded Party'.

"Team leader, you should also be careful."

"Don't argue with Luctiana."

"Oh... eh."

After the two saluted Ali, they left. At first, Saito wanted to say "How very blunt," but it could be that they just didn't know how to respond to this kind of situation.

"Barbarian, carry those two in."

"Ah."

Just as they entered the hospital, a wonderful smell immediately drifted into their noses. It appeared to come from something similar to incense. The interior of the building seemed wider than it appeared from the outside, with several beds in an orderly line. Most of the beds were empty.

Ali rang the small bell hanging next to the entrance, and immediately a female elf, in the prime of her life, wearing a long dress, came out.

The female elf, seeing Luctiana carried in Ali's hand, immediately let out a shout.

"Oh, isn't this Luctiana? What happened?"

"Long time, no see, Sara."

Luctiana responded to Sara, in a weak voice.

"Hmm, looks like you're not here to study barbarians today."

The female Elf's eyes shone. She seemed to notice that Luctiana's condition was bad.

"I would like for you to treat these two, I have money."

Saying this, Ali set Luctiana down on a bed. Saito also gently laid Tiffania on the next bed.

"Let me check their injuries."

Sara carefully examined the bodies of the two laying on the beds.

"Oh, is this girl a half-blood? That's truly rare."

She said while examining Tiffania.

Even though this city interacted with humanity, it appeared that a half-blooded elf was still a rarity.

"What's going on with this strange chest?"

Saying this, Sara poked Tiffania's chest.

"Ah... you, what are you doing?"

The already tired Tiffania, had no choice but to let out a little shriek.

"Hey, I don't need to treat this strange chest?"

"No, no, you don't!"

With tears gleaming in her eyes, Tiffania looked to Saito and asked, Saito... my, my chest, is it really that strange?"

"No, it isn't."

Saito hurriedly responded.

"I think... it's very nice."

"Really...?"

"Ah, it really is. I can guarantee, that's absolutely correct."

"But the doctor said, my chest is very strange..."

"It, it isn't the least bit strange. Tiffa's chest is world-renowned, it's a nice chest!"

"A nice chest?"

"Ah, a nice chest."

"A nice chest...?"

Seeing Saito giving her a thumbs up, and constantly complimenting her chest, Tiffania lowered her head, embarrassed.

"What are you guys doing?"

Luctiana gave the two a suspicious look.

While Sara continued to examine her injuries, her eyes abruptly sharpened.

"These injuries aren't bullet wounds, are they?"

"..."

No words came from Luctiana.

"What happened?"

"I hope you could not ask that question."

Seeing Luctiana's forced smile, Sara could only mutter.

"Is this girl for real..."

Then Sara headed to the shelf where medicine was placed, and neatly prepared something.

"Let me help."

Saito requested...

"Are you a doctor? or a magician?"

Sara immediately turned her head and glared at Saito

"Neither..."

"Then there's nothing that you can help with."

"If they hold a ceremony to strength the spirits, we'll just be in the way if we stay."

Ali said, placing his hand on Saito's shoulder.

"I'm not worried, Saito. Why don't you wait outside."

"...I know."

Hearing Tiffania also suggest this, Saito had no choice but to leave the hospital.

Only then did he see the sleeping Fatima leaning against the wall next to the entrance.

"I'll go and find a hotel to stay at tonight, you're responsible to stay here and watch her."

After Ali had said his piece, his silhouette immediately disappeared down one of the roads.

"Even if you tell me to watch her..."

No matter what you say, letting her continue to sleep against the wall next to the entrance wasn't right, so Saito carried the sleeping Fatima out to the square and laid her on a bench.

"You still can make such an innocent expression."

Carefully studying her gentle sleeping face, he really felt she looked like Tiffania. Even if they were from the same race, it would still be very difficult to find those with the same appearance, two people with such similar faces.

But even if their appearance is the same, the two had one thing that was completely different. Looking at the 'completely different' region, Louise's form appeared in Saito's mind.

"Louise..."

He always felt that he cherished Louise's delicate and cute chest...cherished the washboard on his master's body. After all, recently he had constantly been seeing Tiffania's chest, so what can be said, he felt all sorts of confusion in how he measured chests in his mind.

"Louise, wait for me. I will definitely return."

In the square, businessmen from Halkeginia were conducting lively business with the Elves. This dazzling and chaotic atmosphere, was very similar to when he was taken to Ameya-Yokochō ^[1] by his parents when he was young.

Elves and humans can peacefully coexist here... since it's this way, it definitely should be possible in other places.

Saito rested his hand on the bench, and looked up at the exotic sky.

Halkeginia is definitely also under the same sky.

The Earth's sky, I wonder how it has changed now...?"

While Saito was in his homesick daydream.

"Hey, partner."

"Eh?"

"It looks like Ms. Elf is already awake."

This sentence brought Saito back from his daydream.

At that time, as Fatima was laying on her side, her eyes suddenly opened and she yelled.

"Die, you repulsive descendant of the demon!" And grabbed the conveniently placed Derflinger at her side and swung at Saito.

"Woah!"

Saito jumped up on the bench, dodging the perilous swing. But Fatima once again brandished the sword, and suddenly swung at Saito.

"Partner, I'm sorry, could you please dodge!"

"You're telling me!"

Even if he couldn't rely on Gandalf's power, Saito also had Agnes' personal hand to hand combat training. You only saw him dodge to the side, and easily grabbed and twisted Fatima's wrist as she swung the sword at empty space, forcing her to drop the sword.

"Oh, re..release me...!"

Fatima hatefully glared at Saito. It looked like she was pretending to sleep, looking for the opportunity to sneak attack Saito. If Derf hadn't reminded him, things could've been dangerous.

"Repulsive!"

After Derflinger had been grabbed back by Saito, Fatima shifted to an unarmed attack. She's worthy of being called a soldier, and it appeared she had been trained in hand to hand combat. However, she basically wasn't an opponent for "Gandálf" when he's holding a weapon, and after Saito easily dodged, he immediately subdued Fatima.

"Re... repulsive, I missed a one in a million opportunity...!"

With a regretful expression, Fatima cursed.

"Don't cause trouble in this kind of place."

Saito said to Fatima, who he was subduing on the ground.

All the elves in the square were looking at the two people.

"Uhh, please pay us no mind, everybody..."

Saito momentarily released Fatima, then knocked the dust off his jacket.

Apparently realizing she couldn't beat Saito with a weapon in his hand, Fatima gave up resisting. Then it appeared she suddenly realized something, and started to look around.

"Uh, where are we?"

"The town of Eumenes"

Saito responded.

"You said Eumenes!"

Upon hearing this, Fatima immediately showed an unbearably bitter expression.

"I can't believe it, I never thought I'd return to this place in this lifetime."

"This lifetime?"

Saito really wanted to investigate this matter.

Suddenly came an uncontrollable "grumble" sound.

"Are you hungry?"

Saito asked. There was no surprise that she clearly was a soldier, but it was just that her previous actions lacked power...

"N...no...that wasn't me just now!"

Fatima, a blush across her entire face, howled.

"Hey~"

"I said no!"

"Oh~"

Saito cracked a grin. Then showed a malicious expression.

But... actually Saito's stomach was also hungry. After all, while they were crossing the desert, they had only drunk a little water.

The town plaza had several restaurants, but they had one big problem.

Ever since he was kidnapped by the Elves, Saito hadn't had one cent on his person. Ali, the one with money on his person, was also not nearby, moreover he wouldn't really be willing to lend Saito money.

Possibly guessing Saito's thoughts:

"Partner, I got a way to make money.", said Derflinger.

"Really, Derf?"

"Yup, you see that big street."

Saito looked towards the big street that could be seen from the square.

There were several people gathering on the street. On closer inspection, it seemed to be a group of Halkeginian travelling performers doing a knife throwing demonstration.

Honestly speaking, their skill couldn't be called particularly spectacular, but it seemed to be very welcomed by the Elves.

The naturally talented Saito had a thought.

"If it's like that, I could put on pretty good performance, couldn't I?"

"Good, then just follow their example."

Then Saito looked at Fatima.

"You're also going to help."

"Who would help you?"

Fatima cursed, but a moment later...

another very loud 'grumble~~' sound echoed by.

"oh, n-no...!"

"Look, as hungry as you are, how are you going to kill me?"

Saito gathered several small rocks sitting next to his foot, and passed them to Fatima.

"What are you doing?"

"You just need to throw the rocks at me."

"Don't make me laugh!"

At that point, Fatima dropped the stones in her hands...

it seemed she figured out the plan.

"Humph, ok."

Then Fatima, with what appeared to be a smile, concentrated on gathering up stones on the ground.

A yell ripped from Saito's throat as he stood in the middle of the street brandishing Derflinger.

"Come one, come all! Everyone come and admire this exotic sword dance!"

All the Elven and Halkeginian business on the road stopped after hearing. A short time later, after a small group gathered, Saito began to jump around with Derflinger in his hand.

"Hey! He! Hiya!"

There was very scattered applause... It seems this isn't well received.

"That was just a little warm-up."

After grunting a sigh, Saito beckoned to Fatima.

Fatima glared at Saito with her crystal clear blue eyes and and yelled.

"You can die, devil!"

After saying this, she threw the rocks at Saito's face with all her strength.

"Oh!"

But Saito was "Gandálfr" after all, you could just watch him nimbly dodge, swing Derflinger in his hand, and split the little rock in two on the spot.

The surrounding crowd loudly applauded and cheered, and the Elf children's

expressions glowed.

Saito let out a breath, and wiped the sweat from his forehead.

As expected, it took very little to entertain the Elves. He wasn't sure if the reason for this was a racial trait, or if there just was less entertainment compared to Halkeginia.

"Humph, if my body was in perfect condition, it seems like you're this type of person..."

Fatima, annoyed at failing to destroy Saito, said.

"You... were seriously trying to kill me."

"Hello, why don't you take a look at this!"

An old man running a fruit stand threw a very large coconut over.

A smile came to Fatima's lips, as she held the coconut in both hands.

With the coconut in hand, he started to whisper something in a low voice. Then Fatima, with the coconut in hand, began to chant something in a low voice....

"Partner, this is bad."

"What's the problem?"

"That's Firstborn magic."

"What!"

Around Fatima, the sound of a gale began to echo.

"Spirits of the wind that surround us, smash my enemy!"

In a moment, the coconut, riding on a fierce gale, flew at the speed of a bullet at Saito.

Moreover, it was spinning at a high speed, if he was hit by this thing it would definitely kill him.

"Woah!"

With no time to think, Saito swung Derflinger, and with a ringing "slash" sound, the coconut split in two and flew off into the distance... and the coconut

milk splashed onto Saito's face.

"D...don't underestimate Gandálfr..."

Even Saito's voice was shaking.

"It's definitely dangerous, partner."

"Abomination, what exactly are you..."

The defeated Fatima regretfully stamped her foot.

"That big brother is really ferocious, he beat elf magic!"

"I've never seen such a ferocious swordsman!"

Soon after the enthusiastic applause of the surrounding audience echoed, and one after the other they threw in money and fruit. It's good that we were well received, but...

"But using the legendary familiars power in a street corner performance, it seems a little like I should apologize to Brimir."

Hear Saito say this, Derflinger said in a reminiscing tone.

"No no no, Sasha and Brimir did similar things previously."

After gathering the offered tips, Saito returned to the square and sat on a bench.

"Earned quite a bit of money... oh, there's even silver coins."

He had elven coins whose exterior looked like a slender leaf, as well as the metal coins that are used in Tristain. Among the fruit, there were strange shaped varieties that Saito had never seen before.

"What do you want to eat?"

Looking at a fruit that's exterior looked like a crushed ammonite ^[2], Saito felt doubtful.

In short, first he tried to take a bite... the results being that it was so hard he couldn't take a bite.

"That's skin, you're an idiot."

Fatima coldly said.

"You eat too, because you worked hard for it."

"Humph, I don't need charity from a barbarian."

"OK."

After Saito spoke as if looking for trouble, he peeled off the firm fruit skin, he began to sample that strange fruit.

The texture was similar to a sandy sponge. Not only was there little moisture, it wasn't sweet. It really didn't taste good. But Saito still showed restraint, and deliberately let Fatima see him eating enthusiastically.

"This is really good! I've never eaten anything this good before, Derf!"

"That's really good, partner."

"I, my clan, no one would sell us a few loaves of bread. However, we still had our Elven honor, and never came close to begging..."

Seeing Fatima swallow once, she didn't turn her face to him.

It looked like she intended to persevere to the end.



"Oh, OK. Then, I'll go ahead and eat it all."

With a fire in his heart, Saito started to scoff everything down.

Although Fatima continued to not turn her face to him, after a little while...

"Oh... give it to me, barbarian!"

Having arrived at the limit of her patience, Fatima snatched the fruit out of Saito's hand, and started to wolf it down. You could say she was extremely hungry, since she didn't even care if it got on her uniform, she simply stuffed her mouth as fast as possible.

Not long after filling his stomach, Saito exhaled. At this point, the sun started to go down, and it was already approaching the time for the sun to set, but the square appeared to be even more lively.

"It's truly a nice town, brimming with vitality."

Saito stated his thoughts. While the Elven capital of Adyl was certainly magnificent, it had a very cold feeling, and was really very difficult to like.

On the contrary, the cities like Eumenes were, comparatively speaking, more to his liking.

"Humph... I don't like this city, people who have forgotten their Elven honour gather here."

Fatima cursed.

"I ask you... didn't you use to live in this town?"

Recalling that she had said "I'd never thought I'd return here in my lifetime..." Saito opened his mouth and asked.

"..."

After a little time passed. Fatima spoke as if half talking to herself.

"That is a matter from a long time ago."

Originally it seemed like she definitely wouldn't introduce herself, so Saito felt a little amazed.

"Bearing the punishment for Shajal's crime, our clan was banished afterwards,

and we wandered the desert for a long time. In the end, we arrived at this city that has been known since ancient times as a place of banishment."

Fatima's voice trembled.

"Moreover, a lot of our clansmen decided to stay here. In this city, despised for the people who have been banished here, in a city that flatters and fawns over barbarians... but I'm not like these people. After Master Aishmail found me, I left these streets behind."

Aishmail, I remember he is the leader of the 'Steel-Blooded Party', Saito thought.

"But those guys tried to cook us together in our boat, how can you believe in that guy?"

"What?"

On hearing this, Fatima unhappily wrinkled her brow. That said, at the time they were under attack from the Elven navy, she was in a deep sleep from Ali's enchantment.

"Don't lie, that's impossible."

"What good does lying to you do me. The reason things are this way is only because we escaped from the ship. That guy called Aishmail, he's probably only using you..."

"Not true! Even if that's true, it must be because Master Aishmail didn't know that I was with you guys!"

Please... how exactly could that be... although he thought this, Saito didn't say it.

From the same sea blue pupils she shared with Tiffania, he could see she still firmly believed in the elf called Aishmail.

He could imagine that this girl had been persecuted since she was small, she had constantly suffered miserable situations; her heart filled with nothing but hate. Those people were definitely using and taking advantage of her.

Thinking about it, Saito felt that she seemed a bit pitiable.

Of course, he still wasn't able to forgive her for what she did to Tiffania, but...

Saito closed his eyes, placed his hands on his chest and thought. After a bit... Saito wrapped up all of the money they had just earned, and handed it all to Fatima.

"What are you doing?"

Fatima asked with a surprised expression.

"You can go."

"What?"

"I'm telling you to go now. If Ali comes back, it would be a problem."

Those words really made Fatima angry.

"Repulsive! You demon, you think you can buy my favor!"

"You think too much, I just want to get rid of the trouble you cause. To be honest, I really don't want to watch you. Let me add, as soon as I let down my guard, you immediately become harmful to me. That's how it is, goodbye.

Standing up from the bench, Saito waved, and took a step to leave.

"Brat, you'll regret this..."

Fatima angrily muttered.

This time Saito stopped his steps.

"However, if you dare to do anything bad to Tiffa again, I won't spare you."

Saito turned and glared, scaring Fatima so much she couldn't help but shake.

"You're too naïve, partner."

"Probably."

Saito said, shrugging his shoulders.

Afterwards Saito continued to perform on the street, to earn a little cash.

"Say Derf, we should probably not sell our skills on the street, it's hard to say if can rely on this for food."

"It's hard to say if we can or not. You can have these results, but luckily Elves

usually lack entertainment. Moreover, my partner is already a magnificent lord, there's no need to do ordinary work, and there's no need to worry about the basic essentials."

"What you say is also true."

This world's nobility, apparently truly don't need to work, they just live a pleasant life. However there's a problem - when he returns to his real home, what would he do? He should take advantage of the skill he's developed... Saito suddenly started contemplating these matters.

It had already been nearly a year and a half since Saito had been summoned to the world of Halkeginia.

He didn't know how much time had passed on Earth...

The flow of time on Earth and Halkeginia could be different. But if it was the same, he would currently be preparing to get course guidance. Speaking of that, he was completely unprepared for the entrance exams, would everything really be OK...?

As Saito reminisced about his hometown on Earth while in a different country in a different world, suddenly...

"Oh, I really didn't see wrong! It's Tristain's hero!"

He didn't know where this loud and clear voice came from.

He turned his head towards a man raising his hands buried in goods, walking over from the other side of the street.

The other person wasn't an Elf, it was a older man in his 50s dressed as a businessman.

"Heya, meeting you in a place like this, what a coincidence, isn't it!"

"Who are you...?"

Saito asked as he grabbed Derflinger's handle. Although the man wasn't an Elf, he couldn't be careless. In the end, former nobles used assassins to try to harm Saito.

"Eh, sorry."

"Ah, and this is why being a noble is... oi, you know, think back, I was indeed on Bourdonné Street in Tristain, I sold you that chattering sword."

"Ah, the owner of that weapon shop!"

Saito recalled just then, that this person was the weapon shop owner who sold him Derflinger.

"Oioi, sorry for being that chattering sword, you dimwitted shop owner!"

Derflinger couldn't help but complain.

"You, you, who are you! It can't be, are you that chattering sword? But you don't look anything like you did when you were sold."

"Talk less, a lot of things have happened!"

The old man carefully examined Derflinger, who was in Saito's hand.

"Sir, is this noisy, chattering sword really that easy to use? If you want, I could easily sell you a much better sword!"

"Oi, sorry for being that noisy and chattering sword!"

Hearing Derflinger's temper start to come out.

"He is indeed invaluable, and has saved my life numerous times."

Patting Derflinger's handle, Saito said as he shook his head.

"Oh, that's how it is. If he says so, then... whatever you say, this gentleman is the hero of Tristain that stopped an army of 70000, Chevalier de Hiraga. At the time I boasted to everyone in the town, that the commoner that bought my store's weapon became a hero.

The old man said while rubbing his hands.

"Right, how did you end up here, old man?"

"I'm coming along with the 'Coalition Army for the Restoration of the Holy Lands'. In the end I eat by selling weapons, and if we're talking about war breaking out with the Elves, then this is a great business opportunity."

"You said 'Coalition Army for the Restoration of the Holy Lands'?"

Saito asked in surprise.

"Oh, you didn't know, sir? A few days ago, the army was organized with the Romalian Pope at the core. Finally, they're prepared to take back the holy lands."

"Can... can you tell me the details again."

"Hey, no problem, but I'm unclear on the specific details."

According to the old man's words... Romalia organized the 'Coalition Army for the Restoration of the Holy Lands', and apparently this happened a few days after he was kidnapped by the Elves. The Pope used his excellent negotiation skills to unite the countries of Halkeginia, and prepared to launch the assault on the desert.

"A lot of stuff has happened since I got nabbed..."

That Pope got his way in the end...

To mobilize a huge army to reclaim Saito and Tiffania... no, he was preparing for this from the start.

"Where is the Halkeginian army right now?"

"I heard that they are garrisoned at Alhambra."

Alhambra, Saito had heard this city's name. It was a city on the border of the desert, where Tabitha and her mother were imprisoned.

Saying this, was the army already approaching here?

"Will this place also become a battlefield?"

"That would be unlikely, as this isn't any sort of strategic location."

It looked like there was no need to worry about this city being pulled into the war, and Saito was relieved at hearing this.

Speaking up to this point, Saito became aware of another matter.

"I say, the princess wouldn't... did Queen Henrietta come here as well?"

"Hey, I heard Her Majesty is responsible for commanding Tristain's forces."

"Really?"

Henrietta is nearby, this was indeed the best news he could have hope to

hear.

No, thinking carefully, if the Pope truly wanted to reclaim the 'Holy Lands', it would only be possible if Louise, the one who possessed the Void, was with him.

"Soon I'll be able to see Louise...!"

My beloved master, my affectionate sweetheart, my Louise... Just thinking this filled his heart with images of her, and nearly brought him to tears.

"S, sorry, there's a favor I'd like to ask you!"

"Oh, good. If it's something that I can do, all you need to do is ask."

Seeing Saito's suddenly becoming emotional, the old man nodded his head and replied, not quite following the situation.

"Can you pass word to Queen Henrietta that I'm here?"

At this time... The Elven naval fleet was continuing a large-scale search of the bay, after attacking and sinking the Sea Dragon boat of Saito's group. One by one, the naval personnel who were in the water returned to the deck of the especially huge 'Dragon Whale Boat' located amongst the naval fleet.

"How is it, have you found the corpses of the devil and the traitors?", asked an Elf, with a sharp expression, wearing a high level general's uniform.

He was the leader of the 'Steel-Blooded Party', Aishmail. After hearing of the failure of the 'Dragon's Nest' suppression mission, Aishmail dispatched his own ship on a search and destroy mission from the headquarters in Adyl.

"Yes, the vessel the demons were riding in took critical damage from my fleet's depth charge attack!", a sailor belonging to the 'Steel-Blooded Party' saluted and responded.

"And then, have you found the corpses?"

"Th, that..."

"What? Don't tell me you haven't found the corpses?"

Under Aishmail's piercing gaze, the sailor reported in a quivering voice.

"The, there wasn't a single person on the ship."

"...Really."

Aishmail calmly nodded his head

"Good work. If you want to rest your bodies, it's fine, comrades."

After showing his appreciation to the sailors, he proceeded to the fleet commander's office on the ship.

A relaxed atmosphere filled the sailor living area.

"Your humour is good, Comrade Aishmail, even though we failed to capture the demons.", an officer said.

He was Admiral Salken, the Fleet Deputy Commander. He had attacked and sunk many barbarian pirate ships, a veteran of long service.

"But they are descendants of the devil, I had already anticipated that this wouldn't kill them."

The corner of Aishmail's mouth seemed to smile.

"Where do you think the escaping devils will run off to?"

"Eumenes... it probably is that city previously for banished people."

Salken said, stroking his beard.

"True, if they're still living, they should head towards that city."

"In that case we should immediately send out a search party."

"That won't be necessary."

"Why do you say this?"

"I've heard the barbarian army is approaching the border of the Sahara."

"Really?"

Aishmail rudely changed the subject, making Salken feel doubt. If the barbarian forces already were in the Sahara Desert, was there already no way to pursue the devils?

"Isn't this a good opportunity? It's best to let the barbarians witness the

power of 'it'."

Saying this, Aishmail proudly smiled.

"Don't you think this town of banished people would make an excellent test site?"

"Comrade Aishmail, you don't mean to use the 'Jewel of Fire' on that town?"

Hearing these words, the always bold and fearless Admiral Salken, couldn't help but break out in a cold sweat.

Concerning the use of a 'Jewel of Fire' during the barbarian's civil war, in one moment it incinerated an entire fleet. Of course the capital city of Adyl also received those reports. Upon hearing the report, Aishmail ordered his subordinates to research how to cause a 'Jewel of Fire' to explode.

"Do you have a question?"

Aishmail said in a voice whose temperature was so cold it could cause a person to shiver.

"You really make a good point, but that city also has Elven residents."

"That's fine, in any case they're all people who've given up their Elven pride, and trash who interact with barbarians."

"I understand, that is also true."

Salkan expressed agreement. What the 'Steel-Blooded Party' touted, was the destruction of the barbarians and doctrine of the purity of Elven blood, thus that city that continued to trade with barbarians was a thorn in their side.

"Returning to the topic, it seems that those demons apparently grabbed Fatima as a hostage."

"Fatima?"

After hearing these words, Aishmail wrinkled his brow... soon after he let out the sound of a happy "Oh..."

"She failed her mission. In the end, she came from a group of traitors. Originally I thought she might accomplish something, but in the end she was useless."

And then Aishmail lifted his cloak, and in a loud voice ordered the sailors on the deck.

"Bring out all of the 'Jewels of Fire', let's have ourselves a glorious fireworks display!"

"You want to use 'Jewel of Fire' to level the city? You've got to be kidding!"

Hiding in a secret place, the face of the elf couldn't help but color at hearing the content of the conversation. It was the Elf that had just reported to Aishmail on the deck.

Just then you saw her face twist, and immediately become that of a beautiful woman. This was the square class magic "Face Change" that her partner had cast on her body.

The sailor's true appearance was Fouquet, the one commissioned by the Pope to find Saito and Tiffania.

Several days before, Fouquet, pretending to be an Elven sailor, infiltrated the 'Steel-Blooded Party'.

But hearing this, there was no way she could stay here.

Saito didn't matter to her, but Tiffania, who she thought of as her own daughter, she'd protect.

"Looks like I'll have to hurry a little..."

Fouquet removed her sailor uniform, immediately exposing her slender limbs wrapped in skin-tight cloth.

In this fashion, Fouquet jumped into the sea, and left the ship for a nice long swim.

Chapter 7: The Truth from 6000 Years Ago

On the seventh day of the first week of the ninth month, the 'Coalition Army for the Restoration of the Holy Lands' departed Alhambra and marched towards the Elven base of operation, the Sahara Desert.

Compared to previous marches, the speed of this one was relatively sluggish. After all, never before in all of Halkeginian history had a force of this large a scale been organized.

In the Sahara, with no suitable cities, it was difficult to maintain supply lines. The blazing sun hanging over the heads of the marching troops ruthlessly stole the soldiers' strength.

But even in these severe conditions, you didn't see the slightest drop in the army's morale. Because it wasn't a Halkeginian civil war, it was a 'Holy War', given and guided by the gods.

"We can't stop marching! For Halkeginia's future, we all must bravely advance. Forward, Forward!"

Riding on the back of a unicorn and personally leading the army, Henrietta, wearing a pure white robe, raised her staff high to encourage the troops.

Since Henrietta led from the front lines, Tristain's lords naturally couldn't swagger around in the rear. Each and every one of them crowded forward trying to out-do each other, voicing their devotion to the royal family.

"Recently there have been more and more hangers-on around the Queen." Prime Minister Mazarin said as he urge his horse next to Henrietta.

"Are you being sarcastic with me, Cardinal?"

"Absolutely not, I'm just feeling happy at how Your Majesty has matured."

"You can't be wrong. I have always wished for this matter to be peacefully

resolved."

Henrietta's tone was completely serious.

"I have already pledged to the Founder, I refuse to launch another pointless war."

"Of course the Pope also feels the same. In the end, the 'Coalition Army for the Restoration of the Holy Lands' and the Bearers of the Void, are just insurance for peaceful negotiations.

"If this is true, then it's fine...."

Riding her unicorn, Henrietta sighed to herself.

Henrietta was unable to discover the Pope's true intentions during their conversation in Alhambra.

The Pope was definitely hiding some major secrets related to the 'Holy Land'. In reality, the threat of the land rising that Halkeginia was facing wasn't widely known. It was fine, even if the magical device in the Holy Lands was a lie. That was the only thing that Henrietta, as the Queen of a country, could pin her hopes on.

However, if the Pope persisted in starting a 'Holy War' with the Elves, Henrietta would open negotiations with Elves by herself, with a clear conscience. Just like when she negotiated with King Joseph of Gallia, she would only be accompanied by Agnes.

On the surface she actively prepared for the Holy War, but really that was just to deal with Romalia, and it was better than doing nothing. Of course, this could just be the delusions of a little girl, since it was possible that her plan already had been seen through by the Pope.

Looking up at the endless blue sky of the Sahara, Henrietta suddenly thought of her most important friend.

"Louise, I really envy you."

You can chase your beloved sweetheart, freely soaring through the blue sky. Since I was little, I don't know how much I've looked to you, how much I've envied you....

If I wasn't Tristain's princess... perhaps I could also follow my heart, like Louise.

"No, I just lack courage."

To decide to give up everything, and also fly guided by your heart, to the side of the one you love... The kind of person who people admire for their constant bravery and action, that is Louise's charm, and something Henrietta could never mimic. Certainly Saito would also be enchanted a little....

Henrietta quietly sighed again.

Mazarin, unable to stand it anymore, quietly said.

"Your Majesty, you shouldn't be like this in front of the soldiers."

"I know, Cardinal."

Henrietta corrected her posture while riding on her unicorn.

There was a cavalry soldier from the front of the Tristain forces, that kicked up a dust storm as it came.

The one urging her horse forward was Agnes, the captain on the Musketeer Corps.

"Your Majesty, I have an urgent report!"

"What is it, Agnes?"

Henrietta inquired without damaging her cool and dignified appearance.

The dragon knights we dispatched as scouts report that they discovered a huge vessel in front of our forces."

"We shouldn't be encountering the Elven fleet yet, correct?"

Henrietta's expression stiffened.

"I don't know. But according to the scout's report, it's just one vessel...."

"One vessel?"

Having heard what was said, Henrietta lifted her hand to cover her forehead, and cautiously looked up at the endless blue sky.

After a little while... the bean-sized shadow of a vessel appeared a great

distance in front of them. One side of the vessel was emitting black smoke, and constantly decreasing altitude. As the vessel approached, you could finally see that it was covered in damage, and that the vessel was going to fall right in front of their eyes.

Henrietta and Agnes both knew what vessel this was.

"Majesty... this shouldn't be!"

"Louise... It's Louise, All forces halt."

In the middle of the desert, a special sunshade was quickly set up while camp was being set up. All of Halkeginia's heads of state gathered under the sunshade, sitting in chairs around Louise.

There was Henrietta, Germania's Emperor Albrecht the Third, The newly ascended Queen of Gallia, Josette, also there was Pope Vittorio with Julio at his side like a shadow. Listening about Louise's brave charge to the Elven capital, they all heard her report.

"I'm very sorry for my arbitrary action, Your Highness. I will take whatever punishment you deem appropriate."

Louise removed her cloak with the lily coat of arms, and knelt in front of Henrietta.

"Louise, we will not blame you now. That you are safe and sound is truly a very good thing.



"Princess...."

Henrietta threw her two hands around Louise's body, the two deeply embraced.

Then Louise began to systematically explained the whole story of the rescue and fight to the group.

First there was the fight with the Elven fleet, and there was the destruction of the entire fleet using 'Void'. Although they ultimately succeeded in breaking into the Elven Headquarters 'Kasbah', they didn't find Saito or Tiffania, and consequently escaped from their immediate emergency. However, Louise didn't divulge the matter of Turuk and Bidashal.

"That, we're still unclear on the whereabouts of Saito-dono and Ms. Westwood?"

Facing Henrietta, Louise showed a depressed expression, and nodded.

"If they went by sea, it'll be hard to search."

Albrecht the Third said, while twirling his beard with a finger.

"Dispatch three Romalian naval vessels to search."

"Tristan can also dispatch their special dragon knight corps."

Hearing Vittorio's instruction, Henrietta immediately responded.

This time she couldn't let Romalia take the lead in the search again... Henrietta sharp expression showed this determination.

Louise raised her head and looked towards Vittorio.

Then opened her mouth.

"Your Holiness, may I ask why you, as the representative of the holy church, organized the 'Coalition Army for the Restoration of the Holy Lands', and deliberately provoke a war with the Elves?

"No, it isn't like that, Ms. Vallière."

Vittorio still maintained an earnest expression, shaking his head.

"Our target is ultimately the magical equipment sleeping in the 'Holy Land'. If

we get it, then there is no need for a dispute with the Elves."

"You mean your Holiness accidentally started this war?", Louise cautiously asked.

"At least we'll not spare any effort to avoid war. But that depends on whether the other side has this desire as well."

"Then I'm relieved to hear this, Your Holiness."

"Ms. Vallière, can I ask what you mean?"

"I have some people that would like to meet your Holiness."

"Oh?"

Vittorio said, apparently these word caught his interest.

"Mr. Colbert."

Louise called out from the sunshade, soon after two people, wearing hats, were nervously guided into the sunshade by Mr. Colbert.

"Louise, these two people are?"

Henrietta asked with a confused expression.

"How rude, you still haven't shown your faces."

Albrecht the Third said with a displeased voice.

"Really, barbarians are barbarians, their tone of voice is so coarse."

"What did you say?"

They grabbed and removed the hats from their head.

In a moment, there was a large uproar in the sunshade.

Because what appeared from under the hat was radiant and lustrous blonde hair, crystal clear blue eyes, as well as slender ears like streamlined tree leaves....

"El, Elves...!"

Even the daring and fearless Albrecht the Third, stood there with a dumb look on his face for a moment.

The earliest to take action was the one next to the Pope, Julio. You just saw him quickly draw his sword and prepare to protect Vittorio.

"Don't worry, Julio. I sense no hostility from these two people."

Vittorio's steady voice stopped Julio.

Then asked Louise.

"Ms. Vallière, you captured these Elves?"

But Louise shook her head.

"These two aren't captives, but guests."

"You said guests?"

Albrecht the Third said, glaring at the two Elves. However, Turuk didn't care about his hostility, and walked up to Vittorio.

"You are His Holiness, the Pope from Romalia?"

"Yes, I am the Pope from Romalia, St. Aegis the 32nd, my two elven guests."

Even facing elves, Vittorio's steady expression still didn't waver at all. but you could tell from his eyes, that his curiosity was truly piqued by these two elves.

"It is the first time I'm meeting you, I'm the Elven Consul, Turuk."

"Consul..."

"The person holds the highest power in the Elven Council."

Bidashal said.

These words caused another uproar in the sunshade. You could see Albrecht the Third mumbling in a low voice, Josette's eyes go round, and Henrietta covering her mouth with a sound of surprise.

Among this, only Vittorio's calm and cool attitude remained. The he asked Turuk.

"Lord Consul of the Elves, why have you come here?"

"To negotiate peace."

Turuk concisely responded.

"To negotiate peace...."

It seemed that Vittorio was contemplating some things, and was silent for a moment.

Instead of Vittorio, it was Albrecht the Third who spoke.

"Negotiate with Elves? This is silly. Don't worry about any negotiations, it's hard to believe they came all the way here, but we can't waste the effort. Grabbing these guys as hostages should be able to shut up those Elves."

"That's the silliest option, barbarian king."

"What?"

"I'm not the blood of a king, at best I'm only the consul elected by the council. If I were to be reduced to a barbarian hostage, the council will select another consul, it's that simple. The next consul will probably not be from my stable party, therefore, barbarian king, I'll first remind you that there is no way you can beat the Elves."

Albrecht the Third was immediately speechless upon hearing this, and only able to mumble an "Oh...."

But immediately he grinned and laughed.

"That's not necessary, but we still have the charity of the Founder, Brimir, the power of the 'Void'."

"Originally in this way, your use of 'The Work of the Devil' was truly terrifying."

Turuk very bluntly admitted.

"But my military possesses a similar trump card. The Elves who desire to start a war, apparently they've figured out how your army used the 'Jewel of Fire'."

"What!"

"What did you say!"

Hearing this awful news, caused the color to drain from Henrietta's face. This being the first time she heard this, Louise also had trouble concealing her surprise.

Every person here knew in detail how terrible the 'Jewel of Fire' is. The Mad King Joseph only used one 'Jewel of Fire' and incinerated Gallia's Dual-Use Fleet to ash.

"You still think you're better than us and call us barbarians! No matter how you look at it, it's your actions that are truly barbarous."

Henrietta, unable to contain her anger, cursed.

"You clearly know how frightening the 'Jewel of Fire' is!"

"It's better to say it's 'acquired knowledge', Princess of Tristain."

Bidashal said.

"In these several thousands of years, we Elves have never thought there was such a terrible method to use the 'Jewel of Fire'. It was truly invented by a demon."

Hearing the irony, and hitting the nail on the head with that statement, Henrietta, with no way to refute it, was left speechless.

"Anyway, You using 'The Work of the Devil', the elves using the 'Jewel of Fire', both sides will cause bitter sacrifices. This way, the Sahara will become scorched earth, from then on, it would be uninhabitable... as the chief of the elves, I would like to prevent this. So I took this risk, and came to you to negotiate."

Hearing Turuk's words.

"So it is, I understand your idea, Consul of the Elves. I also wish to avoid needless bloodshed."

Vittorio deeply nodded his head.

"Your Holiness, in that case...."

Louise said, immediately raising her head.

"Your Holiness, you can't mean to make peace with the Elves?"

Albrecht the Third interrupted in protest. From his expression you could see as matters stand, how was he going to persuade the other rulers of Halkeginia" and similar dissatisfied thoughts.

Hearing this, Henrietta fiercely turned her eyes on this vulgar Germanian emperor.

"However, peace comes with a condition."

At that moment, Vittorio opened his mouth and said.

"Oh, what condition?"

"It will be fine as long you temporarily grant us access to the 'Holy Lands'. If you can't agree to this, it doesn't matter how large the sacrifice, we will persevere in carrying out the 'Holy War'."

"You want us to hand to you the 'Demon's Gate' that has been guarded for 6000 years by the Elves?"

"Correct, that is the only required condition."

"...."

On hearing this, Turuk turned to directly face this young Pope.

A tense feeling suddenly enveloped the sunshade.

Holding her breath, Louise waited for Turuk's response.

After what felt like an endlessly long period of time....

"Can I ask a question?"

With great difficulty, Turuk finally opened his mouth to speak.

"Please speak."

"Your target isn't really the Elves living in the 'Sahara Desert', correct?"

Vittorio nodded.

"Our goal is ultimately... only to go to the 'Holy Lands'."

"Hm, to go to the 'Holy Lands', right...?"

It seemed like he was contemplating something, then Turuk twirled his beard with his hand.

Louise and Henrietta's eyes stealthily met.

The matter in the 'Holy Lands'... If you believe what the Pope has said up until

now, it was magical equipment to prevent the lands of Halkeginia from rising.

But it always felt that there was something off strange about this...

"What is the meaning of this?"

At this point, Vittorio stood up and stretched his hand towards Turuk.

"I have something I'd like you to see."

While the important meeting that involved the whole future of Halkeginia was going on under the sunshade, at the same time.... Guiche and Malicorne were standing in front of the 'Ostland', which was half stuck in a sand dune from when it was forced to land, unexpectedly meeting with their companions.

Hearing that Saito and Tiffania kidnapped and taken to the country of the Elves, the members of the Ondine Knight Corps volunteered to join the 'Coalition Army for the Restoration of the Holy Lands'.

"Really, you made everybody worry!"

"How could you leave without saying a word, it's too much!"

"I'm really sorry... originally we were trying to trouble everyone as little as we could."

Guiche faced his companions criticism, bowed his head to everyone and apologized.

But no one was truly angry, actually everyone was worried. He had some good companions... Guiche thought to himself with tears in his eyes.

"See, this guy is also pretty lonely."

Reynald walked up, holding a giant mole.

It was Guiche's familiar, Verdandi. Since they realized that the rescue and combat would be too dangerous, everyone decided to leave their familiars at school.

"Oh, Verdandi, I'm sorry...."

With their happy reunion, Guiche tightly hugged Verdadi. The giant mole

familiar was spoiled, rubbing its nose all over Guiche's face.

"Oh, Cubasil, are you doing well?"

Malicorne's owl familiar also happily flew around his master.

"Mon Mon was also worried to tears. Up until the end, she insisted on going with us."

Gimli said.

"Oh, Montmorency...."

Tears couldn't help but flow again as Guiche said his sweetheart's name.

In reality, everyone setting out on the road from Tristain was only a matter from a few days ago. But it seemed like a couple of years since Guiche hopped on the airship and left the academy....

At the same time he thought to himself, Saito should be feeling even more uneasy.

Guiche pushed his face into Verdandi's fur, and wiped away his tears.

"Right, is there no word about Saito?"

At that time, Gimli asked.

A shadow immediately enveloped Guiche and Malicorne's face.

"...."

Sensing the difference in their companions, everyone became silent.

"Wait a second, they're not dead."

Upon seeing this, Guiche quickly explained.

"I heard he and that Elf girl safely escaped."

"Really.... that's good."

Hearing Malicorne's words, everybody finally exhaled.

"Anyway, our vice commander wouldn't die that easily."

"Right, he is the man with the power to stop a 70000 man army."

Everybody started laughing, and at the same time nodded their heads in

agreement.

In the end, Reynald pushed up his glasses, and muttered.

"It's not that it's a bad thing, but isn't this a bit of a problem?"

"What kind of problem?"

Guiche didn't understand.

"Because Saito is currently alone with Tiffania, right?"

"Right."

"In other words, if we're not careful, we could cause some confusion."

Everybody strongly nodded, agreeing with Reynald's words.

"No, Saito is an extremely focused man."

For his friend's honor, Guiche defended Saito.

In reality, Saito truly was very focused on Louise, of this there is no doubt.

But Malicorne spoke, cutting into the conversation at that time

"Of course, the normal Saito is definitely focused. But a man and a woman alone, facing a life-threatening escape. Previously I've said, in these extreme situations, it will accelerate the deepening of the feelings between men and women. Moreover, that Elf's chest is so big. In reality, although Saito is a good person, he has no immunity against big chests."

"Oh, um...." Guiche stalled

Really, remembering, this isn't completely without precedent... he could speak of too many examples. Of course, speaking of Guiche, Montmorency was his most important sweetheart. But time, place, and situation were different, and it could be a 'this is two different matters' state of mind. This also wasn't impossible.

But it wouldn't matter, since Saito was focused on Louise, for Tiffania it would be hard to say. On the contrary, she still could start to have feelings for Saito, or try to reduce the distance between them....

While Guiche was careful pondering, Éléonore, wearing work clothes, left the

hold of the "Ostland" which was quarter-buried in sand. Up until then she'd been repairing the boiler.

Éléonore immediately discovered Malicorne, and yelled in a stern voice.

"Hey, little pig, what are you doing! Why don't you hurry up and help!"

"Yes, yes! Immediately! Little pig! The little pig that I am, is going!"

Malicorne happily shouted, and then immediately headed towards the ship.

Seeing how he's acting, Reynald said with emotion.

"He seems to be happy."

"Ms. Vallière, I hope we succeed to peacefully negotiate with the Elves, without any complications.

"I hope for this... but it seems like it won't be that easy."

Louise dispiritedly replied to Siesta, who was steeping tea and talking.

After the meeting in the sunshade... Louise returned to the tent.

Vittorio took Turuk and Bishadal to the 'St. Mark', the vessel used especially by the Pope, anchored on a sand dune. The thing the Pope wanted to let the two Elves see apparently was the highest secret of Romalia, so Henrietta and Louise both had no way to go along with them.

"Romalia's secretive nature is truly unchanging."

While drinking a cup of tea, Louise faintly sighed.

"Is it possible the talks have hit a snag?"

"It seems the Elves are not all of the same mind either, a pro-war faction exists among the Elves as well."

"Ah, it looks like there isn't really any difference between Halkeginia and the country of the Elves."

Siesta looked up at the desert's sky.

"In any case, we've done all that we can. Now we just have to trust Saito and Ms. Westwood."

"That's also true...."

Louise impatiently thought, as she surveyed the sky filled with sand, blown by the wind.

What Siesta said was correct, all they could do now was wait here. If she knew where Saito was, she'd immediately rush to his side....

Where was Saito now, what was he doing?

"In his heart, is he worried about me? Or...."

Watching the desert scenery gradually change by the brush of the wind, an abrupt feeling of disquiet appeared in the suddenly sensitive mind of Louise.

Thinking about what Malicorne said before the battle with the Elven fleet at Adyl.

She seemed to remember, that in extreme situations, feelings between men and women suddenly could heat up....

At the time, they were talking about a truly boring topic, guys are stupid, a group of major idiots. Could the current Saito be tempted by a girl other than me, is it possible? Although I'm thinking like this....

But carefully thinking, with that charming girl, Tiffania, a guy and girl alone in a foreign land... maybe you can't say it's entirely impossible.

"Uh huh," Louise softly sighed.

"Maid, I have something I'd like to ask you."

"What is it?"

Siesta tilted her head, feeling confused.

"That thing that Guiche and them were just talking about. A guy and girl escaping as fugitives, would that really close the distance between them?"

"Oh, are you worried, Ms. Vallière?"

Siesta teased.

"H, H, How could I! A, at the most I just doubt the possibility of it, and this is just academic interest. Because Saito is completely captivated by me."

"Hm, that's right."

Unexpectedly, Siesta bluntly acknowledged it.

"But it's hard to say. If the two are alone, and Ms. Westwood let Saito see her chest, Saito might not be able to resist."

Louise suddenly realized this.

Tiffania's chest definitely hides an astonishing power, it could already be thought of as a magical weapon. If you're constantly seeing that kind of chest, losing your judgment and reason wouldn't be surprising.

"Ah, oh...but, but...."

While Louise was trying to avoid her inability to deny the possibility....

"If it's too late to change anything between Saito, and Ms. Westwood, what do you plan to do, Ms. Vallière?"

"Eh...?"

Louise was immediately rendered speechless by this question.

If Saito touched Tiffania's chest, and buried his face in it....

Of course it's not alright, don't even think about it. If this was the previous Louise, she would most likely send Saito flying with a kick, and then bestow an 'Explosion' on him. But....

"Wh, what does it matter, I'll forgive him if it's only touching her chest."

Louise revealed a calm attitude, and lifted up her pink hair.

In the end, Saito and I have already 'seen each other naked', and confirmed each other's feelings. I can forgive him for touching chests, this is the demeanor of a calm and mature woman.

"Eh~ What about kissing?"

"Kiss...."

Wh, wha... Louise screamed.

Trying to visualize Saito and Tiffania kissing....

It's not ok, still not ok, Louise thought. Honestly, she doesn't want for Saito to

kiss.

Kissing and chest touching are two entirely different things.

This was the bottom line she couldn't concede, but....

"I, it doesn't matter... I, I'll forgive...him...."

"Eh, you'll forgive him!"

"Of course it isn't alright. Basically, no good at all... bu, but if it's just once, then I can forgive it."

Louise still maintained her calm.

I already decided, even if Saito is bewitched by another girl, I still won't get angry. As long as Saito safely returns, kissing can actually be forgiven, but once, only once.

"With the tongue is ok?"

"What are you saying?"

"Is the tongue not ok?"

"Of course not."

This time Louise spoke very firmly.

"Stingy"

"Y, you really...."

Louise voice shook

"So like this... you can forgive him?"

Siesta whispered a word next to Louise's ear.

"Squish?"

Louise's expression showed surprise. She didn't know the meaning of this word.

This maid really is just talking crazy.

Is it possibly because of the desert heat, so she lost her head do to the heat?

"Squish, and then scrub."

"Scrub?"

Siesta whispered next to Louise's ear again.

Louise finally understanding the meaning of those two words, and immediately got angry.

"I, idiot! Are you a pervert!"

"I saw it in a book, want me to lend it to you next time to see?"

"Us, useless...I should say, ho, h, h, how could this be, it's impossible. Even though I'm a noble, the third daughter of the respected La Vallière family."

"Anyway, Ms. Vallière, there's no way, it's physically impossible for you."

Siesta squeezed her breasts together, flaunting them.

"Wh, what, I also have that sort of thing...."

Louise whispered, and tried to squeeze her cleavage together.

"Aha, Ms. Vallière, that looks like the washboard I usually use when I clean clothes."

Hearing this, Louise angrily grabbed her wand and hit the laughing Siesta.

At the same time....Turuk and Bidashal, guided by the Pope, entered the 'St. Mark', the airship used especially by the Pope.

Installed in the airship's chapel, was the thing that Vittorio wanted to show the two.

"The 'Steel-Blooded Party' right? It looks like you aren't united either."

"Ya, you're also the same."

"I truly have no response," Vittorio bitterly laughed while he responded.

So it's been since ancient time, Humanity is only able to unite when a common enemy appears. That's right.

"Hmm?"

Sensing the overtones of these words, Turuk couldn't help wrinkle his brow.

Going to the end of the hall, they came to two Templar Knights standing guard in front of a large door.

After Vittorio commanded the Templar Knights to depart, he placed his hand on the gem in the center of the large door. White light immediately was emitted from the gem, and the sound of a door opening could be heard.

"Please come in, you two."

At Vittorio's urging, the two Elves entered the chapel.

Bidashal, examining the interior of the room, couldn't help but frown. The chapel was quite plain, it really didn't seem to be used by the Pope.

A few rays of sunlight entered the room from a small window. There were silver candlesticks, a very small altar, and on the altar was a small round mirror, it looked like there was nothing here to be seen.

What did the Pope ultimately want to show the two of them in this place....

"So, the thing you wanted to show us, what exactly is it?"

Bidashal asked.

Soon after, Vittorio touched the round mirror on the altar with his hand.

"This is the 'Founder's Round Mirror,' it is one of the secret treasures left behind by the Founder, Brimir."

"The Founder's secret treasure... a magic tool for the 'Bearers of the Void' to produce the work of the Devil?"

Bidashal had seen Joseph previously hold the 'Founder's Censor'.

It seems like that normal and ordinary tools gave the power of the Void to that devil of a man.

"Correct. But this mirror doesn't only impart the 'Void'... rather it was by the Founder's side from the beginning, it's an item that recorded the life of the Founder."

Vittorio sang a Void spell, 'The Founder's Round Mirror' immediately began to faintly glow.

This is the void incantation 'Record' which shows intense memories that had

been poured into an object, in the mind.

"Do you two know what the true nature of the 'Holy Lands' is?"

After hearing this, Turuk appeared to think about it, then shook his head.

"Honestly, we are completely ignorant of that place. All we know is that, from legends, a demon that came from there 6000 years ago caused 'The Great Disaster', leading to the death of half of the Elves, thus we call that place 'The Demon's Gate'."

"You two can witness the truth of 6000 years ago, here and now."

"What?"

In a moment, strange imagery suddenly appeared in the two's minds.

An overgrown plot of land... and standing on that plot was a man and woman. Respectively, one was a blonde haired young man of small stature, wearing a gown, and the other was a slender and beautiful Elf.

"This is...."

"The Founder Brimir and the first Gandàlfr Sasha, you elves call her 'the Hero Anubis'."

"So Gandàlfr really is the Elf hero Anubis... it really is this way...."

Bidashal said in a low voice.

The Elven hero with runes glowing on her left hand. Since before, Bidashal was concentrating on the relationship between Gandàlfr and Anubis, and carrying out personal research.

"But if Gandàlfr and Anubis are the same person, that'll cause a contradiction. In Elven legend, Anubis killed the demon."

"No, that legend is correct."

"How is that possible, are you saying that 'Gandàlfr', the guard of the demon, murdered your god?"

Facing Bidashal's question, Vittorio responded with silence.

From the image projected in their minds, Brimir and Sasha were fighting

together.

The enemy weren't Elves, and also weren't man-eating ghosts or dog-headed demi-humans, but rather the 'Varyag', a race that was completely similar to the barbarians. However, they were different from current barbarian, as the Varyag were equipped with metal weaponry.

Afterwards, time sped up... Brimir's group gradually added companions.

Among them were Halkeginian barbarians, as well as Elves. Later on, children were born to the group led by Brimir, and started building cities all over the place. It appeared that barbarians and Elves coexisted in total peace....

But after a moment, the scene changed.

In a scene of the vast Sahara Desert, Brimir was chanting some incantation.

Sasha showed a depressed expression, and squatted on her heels.

The incantation completed. You just saw Brimir wave his wand, and then a brilliant flash of white light filled their eyes, and the Elven capital, originally built in the desert, was reduced to ash in a moment.

Both Turuk and Bidashal couldn't look away, looking at the horrible scene.

You couldn't see any sort of emotion on Brimir's face.

Only in the depths of his eyes appeared the bottomless 'Void'.

In the end, you just saw Sasha slowly stick a knife into the middle of Brimir's chest....

Then, at that time, the light left 'The Founder's Round Mirror', at the same time, the image projected in their mind disappeared with the light.

"...This is the truth about the 'Great Disaster' from 6000 years ago."

Bidashal blankly said.

"What is this... a very difficult calamity to describe."

Turuk mumbled in a low, hoarse voice.

At the same time he understood the reason why the Pope let them see these images.

They saw where the Founder Brimir, the one the barbarian revered as a deity, came from, what he waged war against, the legacy he left his descendants, and the mission of Brimir's followers... this is what the Pope wanted to show them.

"Do you understand this? Our true goal, is basically not the 'Sahara' that you live in."

"So it is, you wanting to reclaim the 'Holy Land', actually is...."

"It's exactly as you guess, Lord Consul of the Elves."

After these word, Vittorio didn't continue speaking.

Turuk looked into Vittorio's crystal clear eyes, that looked like the surface of a lake.

There wasn't any personal desire, eyes full of incomparably pure faith. In a sense, he was the greater threat of madness compared to the fire burning in the eyes of the members of the 'Steel-Blooded Party'.

"He absolutely can't be trusted. However, these words can be trusted."

After Turuk reached a conclusion, using reasonable judgment and following the Elves line of thought, he reached out a hand to this young Pope.

"Good. If there is truth in your words, we Elves will also help you in your 'Holy War'."

"Oh hoh."

Vittorio grasped Turuk's hand.

"Thank our Progenitor, and your 'Great Will'."

Chapter 8: The Founder's Void

In order to persuade the members of the council, the Elf Consul Turuk immediately left to return to Adyl.

At the moment, along with the pro-war representatives, led by the 'Steel-Blooded Party', most of Adyl was presently preparing to face the attack of the Halkeginian military forces. Since the situation was so critical, the Pope ordered Julio to escort Turuk on his return.

Turuk told Bidashal, who'd been watching him.

"After this, it is up to you."

Bidashal calmly nodded his head.

Actually, Turuk still didn't completely trust the Pope. In order to completely understand that person named Vittorio, they had to leave Bidashal here.

Vittorio and Henrietta's eyes followed Julio and Turuk as the wind dragon they rode flew towards the other end of the desert.

"Maybe we can prevent unnecessary sacrifice this way. The matter of Ms. Vallière heading to the Elven country, maybe it was truly the guidance of the Founder."

"Yes, Your Holiness."

Henrietta said, nodding her head.

The thing she truly longed for was to peacefully coexist with the Elves.

"But why do I feel so uneasy?"

I don't know why, but there's something strange when the Pope says the words, "Advance to the Holy Lands."

"But if we want to achieve peace, I have a question."

Bidashal said.

"What?"

"Since the navy is controlled by the 'Steel-Blooded Party,' those guys probably won't listen to the advice of Lord Turuk. If they use the 'Jewel of Fire,' you're pretty much outta luck."

"Originally this was true. But please relax, we have a trump card in hand."

"Oh, trump card... This I must learn about."

"Very good. Queen Henrietta, can you please call Louise over here?"

"Louise Françoise Le Blanc de La Vallière is here, ready for orders."

Louise, responding to the request to come into the Romalian sunshade, spoke as she knelt in front of Vittorio.

"Ms. Vallière, I have something to give to you."

Saying this, Vittorio handed over a small old-fashioned box to Louise, who was in front of him.

"This thing should belong to you."

Afterwards, Vittorio opened the box.

The things that were pulled out of the box were an old censor, a small music box, and a ring with a few precious stones. At the first glance, it looked like a pile of junk, but Louise's intuition felt that these weren't ordinary items.

"This is?"

"This is 'The Founder's Censor', 'The Founder's Music Box', and 'The Ring of Andvari'. They were all recovered from Mjöðvitnir."

This shocked Louise.

Sheffield, the Mjöðvitnir that died with King Joseph. It seems that the Romalian church secretly recovered 'The Founder's Secret Treasures' that she previously possessed.

"May I ask, why do you want to give me, 'The Founder's Secret Treasures'?"

"So that you can learn 'The Founder's Void'. 'The Founder's Secret Treasures'

are items necessary to unleash the Founder's Void."

"The Founder's Void?"

"Correct, the strength of this void far outdistances that of your 'Explosion'."

"Void that's even stronger than 'Explosion'..."

Even hearing the Pope say this, Louise was completely unable to conceive this notion. In the end, Louise's 'Void' incinerated the elven fleet in one attack, if he's saying that it's stronger than that, exactly what kind of destructive power is it...

"If I can ask, does Your Holiness not intend to reconcile with the elves?"

"Presently we still don't know whether or not peace can be established, moreover, there's also an extremist faction amongst the Elves. They may try to use the Jewel of Fire to annihilate our 'Coalition Army for the Restoration of the Holy Lands'. Thus it is necessary by means of the Founder's Void, to protect ourselves and not be threatened by the Jewel of Fire.

"So it's this way, this power is even stronger than 'The Demon's Light'?"

This time Bidashal jumped into the conversation.

"Yes, Lord Bidashal. This is our trump card."

"My apologies..."

"Louise opened her mouth to ask, as her hands slightly shook.

"Why have you chosen me? Since Your Holiness has become one who possesses the Founder's Void, it wouldn't be right."

"Because it's impossible for me."

Vittorio said, shaking his head.

"This was mentioned before, although it's unlike systemic magic, but those who possess the Void all have a part of the system they specialize in. For example, I am 'Movement', Ms. Westwood is 'Forget'. Although I know the method to utilize the Founder's Void, there's no way for me to actually activate it. The Founder's Void, among the items of Founder Brimir's Legacy, is particularly special, it's only possible that you, Ms. Vallière, can chant it since

Gandàlfr became your familiar.

Saying this, Vittorio handed all of the treasure he pulled out to Louise.

At that moment, some things started to glow in Louise's cloak.

"Louise, the Founder's Prayer book is glowing!"

Henrietta let out a surprised sound.

"Ms. Vallière, please open the Founder's Prayer book and have a look."

Louise, with an uneasy look, stole a glance at Henrietta.

Henrietta immediately gave a hint of a nod.

Thus Louise pulled the Founder's Prayer Book out of her cloak.

And then slowly opened the book...

Originally it was a blank page, but glowing rune characters now appeared.

"Oh hoh!"

The Pope let out a sigh.

Subsequently, Louise studied the characters that appeared in the Prayer Book.

"When the four mages and four familiars appear, the final and strongest void..."

'Life'.

Louise felt that, on the first time seeing the image of these spell runes, they gradually slipped into her consciousness.

Due to the power being too strong, a trembling Louise knelt on the ground, stunned.

"This, what is this... really... really very dreadful."

"Louise, are you alright?"

Henrietta asked, with a face full of worry, as she put a hand on Louise's shoulder.

"Eh, I'm alright... Princess... it's just that my mind is full of things..."

Louise said, as she put her hands to her face, simply trying her hardest to escape from that dreadful feeling.

"This also shouldn't surprise you. According to legend, even the Founder Brimir only ever cast this incantation once in his entire life."

"Your Holiness... This terrible spell, is it truly necessary?"

Louise worriedly inquired.

"I also pray that we don't need to use this 'Void'. But I bear the responsibility for all of the people of Halkeginia, so the best I can do is to always be prepared for the worst possible situation at all times.

Vittorio's voice carried a bitter tone.

"Now Ms. Vallière, please get some rest first, to save up your magical energy."

The sun set on the edge of the desert... Louise, leaving the cover of the Romalian sunshade, sat by herself in a lonesome spot far away from the noise.

--'Life'.

The devastation this Void creates, far exceeded the might of 'Explosion'. What was the Founder thinking in the end, giving the ironic name of 'Life' to this kind of spell.

"Ah..."

Louise deeply sighed.

As the third daughter of Duke La Vallière, she had always been taught, that those people who possess power have a duty to use that power for the people. Since she possess the power of the 'Void', she always thought she should use that power for Halkeginia.

"But for me, as one person, to bear this kind of power, it really is too heavy..."

Tiny Louise, Bottom of the list Louise, Louise the Zero.

She was once known by these nicknames, now she was the bearer of Halkeginia's fate.

At that time Louise recalled her familiar, who was far away at the moment.

If it was Saito, what would he do?

If he suddenly obtained enough power to destroy the world...

"Saito... I really want to see you..."

Louise tightly grabbed the edge of her cloak.

If she didn't tightly hold on to something, the tears would definitely start flowing.

At that time, the sound of someone walking on sand came from behind her.

Louise quickly turned her head to look.

The person coming was...

"Tabitha?"

Right after Louise asked, she realized she misidentified the person.

The person who was coming didn't wear glasses, and she was also wearing a long, gorgeous cloak.

Moreover, the crown of Gallia was on her head.

"Jose... Queen Charlotte."

Louise quickly stood up, and prepared to face royalty.

"It's alright to call me Josette, Vanessa."

Josette called Louise by the name she used before at Saint Margarita's Monastery.

This caused Louise a moment of uncertainty. Since they separated at that monastery, she hadn't had a proper talk with Josette. In the end, she was already the Queen of Gallia, moreover Louise always felt a little embarrassed about how Josette had actively aided Romalia.

Not knowing whether or not she understood the issue in Louise's heart, Josette sat next to Louise.

"About 'The Founder's Void', I heard from His Holiness, the Pope."

"Yes..."

"I can appreciate your confusion. After being taken away from Saint Margarita's Monastery, I've now become the Queen of Gallia. Moreover, like you, I've become a bearer of the Void."

Josette spoke to Louise with an intimate voice, just like when they were in the monastery.

If you're talking about a person who had suffered, Josette has been at the mercy of a much more severe fate. And although she wasn't like Louise, the bottom of the class but still the third daughter of a famous noble family, that narrow world was the only one she'd known for her entire life.

"Aren't you afraid of this power of the Void?"

Louise revealed her feelings on this.

"Yes. Suddenly receiving such a tremendous amount of power, anyone would be scared."

"No, no, it's not like that."

Louise violently shook her head.

"If you don't want to use this terrible power, then don't use it, because we have our determination. However, suppose it was to save Saito, I definitely wouldn't hesitate in using it. No, I would possibly hesitate, I would maybe be very worried, but in the end I'd still use it. No matter how terrible the devastation would be... I'm afraid of myself like that."

Josette gently laid her hand on top of Louise's trembling hands.

"But I wouldn't regret it. For Julio, I also wouldn't care about the price. Really, I did exactly what he said to, and snatched the throne away from my older sister. I'm nothing but a dirty thief, but..."

Speaking to her, Josette tightly bit her lip.

"But I wouldn't regret it. It doesn't matter how he ordered me, I would accept it. If he told me to die, I would die. This is how I, who had nothing, got my one true love."

"Josette..."

Feeling the surprise in the hand she was holding, Louise couldn't help but stare at Josette.

The current Josette gave Louise an unexpected feeling. At the time they were in the monastery, it was clear she was a timid and frail girl.

In the end, what led her to become strong... Louise pondered.

Of course, naturally it's that Romalian priest.

"So love can let a person change this much..."

Louise thought of Saito.

After meeting Saito, Louise also changed quite a bit. If I didn't meet Saito at that time... I would definitely be manipulated by Romalia now, guiding Halkeginia as some 'Saint'.

But my feelings towards Saito, and Josette's love apparently have some differences...

"Are you saying that my feelings aren't equal to hers?"

Thinking about these things, Louise's mood gradually became more serious.

Louise returned to 'The Ostland' with a serious look on her face, just seeing Guiche and the other members of the Ondine Knights around the camp fire drinking and singing, happily laughing and having a good time.

"My Valkyrie was like this, slash slash slash quickly dispatching the oncoming Elves with a swing of a sword! Ah, I really want Mon Mon to see my brave face!"

"And then, my wind magic made a 'whoosh' sound, and blew away the vile Elven golem, crying as it went!"

Guiche and Malicorne were apparently telling their comrades about their earlier heroic deeds when they bravely charged the tower of the Elves.

"Although there were quite a few embellishments... or it should be said that it's

practically all made up", thought Louise. Colbert and Kirche were currently repairing the Ostland, and Tabitha was by the fire buried in a book, so no one could expose their boasting.

"Wh, What are those idiots up to, people are obviously worried."

It looked like Louise was a little annoyed.

"You're all actually having a good time, but Saito and Tiffania have obviously not returned yet."

"Even if we're dejected and depressed, it's also not going to bring them back."

"Right, Louise, it doesn't matter what we do, first we need to get ready for our next move."

Hearing Guiche and Malicorne's retort, Louise mumbled a little.

However, what those two said made sense. Even if they were dejected and depressed, it wouldn't bring back Saito. Thinking this, actually made Louise feel even more sad.

"Come and eat, Ms. Vallière. I spent a lot of effort to make this."

Siesta helped Louise set up a table and chair, then brought over wine and a tray with meat, vegetables, and soup.

"Thank you for the food."

Louise took a drink of the soup. Originally she didn't have any appetite, but it gradually improved as she ate, and in a moment the food was all gone.

"It was really delicious, thank you."

"Cooking is the only thing that I can do."

Said Siesta with a smile spread across her face.

The present Louise felt that the Siesta in front of her was truly dazzling.

"No such thing, you're a bigger help to everyone than I am."

"Ms. Vallière don't you possess amazing power?"

"Amazing power... is it truly that way?"

Louise's heart was again shrouded in a haze, and she lowered her head.

"What happened?"

"It doesn't matter how amazing the power is, in the end it depends on how you use it. Even if it's the power of the Void passed down from the Founder, if it's used in the wrong way, it can also be a power that leads to disaster. I'm really scared, scared that I'll become like Joseph, that one day I'll eventually be devoured by this power."

Louise thought about the end of Joseph.

Enveloped in a giant fireball, Gallia's dual-use fleet was annihilated.

Although she had no sympathy for him, but if Joseph hadn't awoken to the power of the 'Void', perhaps he wouldn't have come to the end that he did.

"It's not a problem."

Siesta matter-of-factly said.

"Huh?"

"If it's Ms. Vallière that we're talking about, there's definitely not a problem."

"Ho, how can you be so certain? There's no way I'm that strong, like I can't do anything now that Saito isn't by my side."

Louise squawked a retort.

Truly, this maid doesn't understand anything, is she just going through the motions with me...

"It's just because of this."

Siesta responded.

"Ms. Vallière is both timid, and flat-chested, so there's no problem."

"..."

There was no way that this thoughtlessly sarcastic comment wouldn't make Louise feel confused.

But the crazy thing is that it didn't feel wrong at all.

It gave her an indescribably wonderful feeling of courage.

"Really, it's truly a great thing to have you along with us."

Louise agreed with a bitter smile.

At that time, a disturbance came from inside the sunshade of Tristain's forces.

On careful observations, Dragon Knight forces mounted on wind dragons had just landed in the camp.

"What's going on?"

Louise and Siesta both took a look.

"Is this true!"

"Yes, yes, it's definitely Tristain's hero, Chevalier de Hiraga."

In the camp of Tristain's forces, a merchant was kneeling in front of a member of the Musketeer Corps, led by Agnes. This merchant was scared to the point of trembling by this soldier. He was discovered by scouting dragon knights while he was rushing towards Tristain's forces by horse, in order to pass the news that Saito was in Eumenes, thus was brought to Henrietta.

"How do you see it, Prime Minister Mazarin?"

"Ah, it seems reliable."

Saito's kidnapping by elves, was also a secret that was known by only a few people in Tristain. Moreover, by his timid appearance... it seems that he wasn't a swindler looking for a reward.

"You're aware of the consequences if you lie to her Majesty."

Agnes sternly warned the merchant while point her sword at him.

"I, I swear by the Founder and her Majesty!"

The merchant violently kowtowed.

"It seems to be true."

"Very good, give this person 500 gold coins."

"5-500 gold coins?"

Hearing this, the old merchant's eyes opened wide. That large sum of money

was sufficient for a commoner to live the good life for a whole year.

"Agnes, immediately dispatch our best knights to Eumenes."

"Roger!"

After Agnes answered, she turned and prepared to leave the sunshade.

At that time, the sound of a dispute came in from outside, and Louise walked in.

"Hey, Louise! What is it?"

"Princess, I heard Saito has been found, is it true?!"

Louise shouted.

"Yes, I heard he's in a location 200 leagues from here, in an elven city."

Henrietta said in a calm voice.

"I'm presently about to order the elite knights to go meet him."

"Princess, let me go with them too!"

"No, you can't."

But Henrietta shook her head.

"Why...!?"

"Because we don't know what dangers are there. Louise, do you understand? The power that your body holds no longer belongs to only you."

"But..."

"Her Majesty Henrietta is not mistaken, Ms. Vallière."

At that moment, a steady persuasive voice was directed at Louise.

Vittorio, accompanied by Templars, entered into the sunshade.

"Your Holiness..."

"You hold the entire fate of Halkeginia, the one who possesses the Void. We can't let you have the opportunity to encounter even the slightest bit of danger."

"This... Saito is my familiar."

"Please believe me."

Vittorio said, showing a sincere expression.

"Furthermore, Queen Henrietta, I disapprove of using the knight corps. If the movements are too obvious, we'll instead be exposing Saito and Ms. Westwood to danger."

Henrietta wrinkle her brow.

"Your Holiness doesn't mean for us to leave everything to Romalia?"

"Yes, I've already dispatched serious experts. Those experts have received this commission, and it's an expertise they specialize in."

"Ah, you truly move quickly. If we're talking about spies and assassins, Romalia has a long history and profound knowledge."

Hearing this, Henrietta couldn't help but mock it.

Watching the two exchange words, Louise thought that... Romalia absolutely couldn't be trusted.

If there was no way to save and return Saito and Tiffania soon, those so-called 'experts' would kill those two without any hesitation.

If you think that anybody is going to take you at your word, then you're gravely mistaken.

But I'm Louise, Louise Françoise.

Louise took courage and arrived in front of Vittorio.

"Your Holiness, Saito is my familiar. Thus it should be me to go meet him, this is justified."

"Ms. Vallière, Saito-dono isn't really yours exclusively. Saito-dono and Ms. Westwood, are truly important to all of the people of Halkeginia.

"Those two are not Your Holiness' tools!"

At the end of her patience, Louise roared.

But even faced with a Louise who is unwilling to back down, Vittorio was still unmoved.

With a calm voice from the start.

"You are a follower of Brimir, thus you have a duty to follow the church. If not, I will have to accuse you of heresy."

"What did you say...!"

This made Henrietta's complexion suddenly change.

Heresy, speaking of Halkeginian nobility, this was the most terrible and serious accusation of all.

In the case that it was determined to be heresy, the criminal charge wouldn't only be for Louise, but would also include her older sisters Cattleya, Éléonore, and Louise's parents.

Hearing this, even Louise had no choice but to back down. This and Louise returning her title of nobility to Henrietta can't even be compared, it wasn't just a problem for Louise on her own.

Louise was immediately at a loss for words, she could only indignantly stare at the Pope.

"Wh, what should I do, Louise..."

Then at that point.

"But your Holiness, this is interfering with the internal affairs of my country."

Unexpectedly, the one to surprisingly contradict the Pope was Henrietta.

"Princess?"

Louise suddenly raised her head.

You could just see Prime Minister Mazarin scared to the point of shock---

As well as Henrietta, with a firm expression on her face, blocking Vittorio from the front.

"Louise isn't your tool. Louise Françoise Le Blanc de La Vallière is my subject. I, as the Queen of Tristain, order her to go meet Chevalier Saito and Ms. Westwood!"

"Princess...!"

This brought an unbearable heat to the corner of Louise's eyes.

It's truly incredible... The usually strict Henrietta, unexpectedly, in spite of her position as Tristain's Queen, chose to support Louise.

"Princess, I..."

"Go immediately, Louise, go to the side of the one you love."

After Louise deeply bowed her head in respect to Henrietta, she immediately charged out of the sunshade.

"Queen Henrietta..."

"Your Holiness, Louise is following my orders as her monarch. If you want to speak of punishment, then please punish me for the crime of heresy."

Henrietta lowered her head, and knelt in front of Vittorio.

"..."

The sunshade was immediately enveloped in an endless silence. Agnes worriedly followed the development of the situation, and Mazarin quietly said a prayer.

Vittorio calmly closed his eyes, and placed his hand on the shoulder of Henrietta as she knelt on the ground.

"Please raise your head, Queen Henrietta."

"Your Holiness..."

"Indeed, Ms. Vallière is a subject of the Kingdom of Tristain. It shouldn't come from us as the voice of Romalia. Moreover, we can't let this matter just now sow the seeds of discord amongst all of Halkeginia, that was so difficult to unite.

Said Vittorio with his persistent calm smile.

"I shall engrave Your Holiness' magnanimous mercy into my heart."

A gentle atmosphere immediately pervaded the inside of the sunshade.

"In this case we should also begin preparing to welcome them back."

"Wa, wait a minute, Louise."

Kirche grabbed Louise's cloak as she charged out from under the sunshade.

Louise fell over, burying her face in the sand.

"Wh, what did you do!"

"Don't tell me you intend to run across the desert?"

"How could that be, I intend to use the 'Teleport' spell."

Louise said while wiping the sand from her face.

The same method she used to escape from Saint Margarita's Monastery. While repeatedly casting the Teleport spell, and resting along the way, she would arrive in the city where Saito was located.

"You big idiot, that city is 200 leagues away. You'd exhaust your mental energy halfway there.

"Ah..."

That seems to be right... Louise thought. How would she do this...

At that time, the flap flap sound of giant wings could be heard.

On careful observation, it was Tabitha riding on Sylphid.

"Get on."

"Kyui, kyui! Pink midget, get on Sylphid's back immediately!"

"Tabitha..."

"It's faster than riding a horse," Tabitha said in a calm voice.

"Thank you..."

Louise slightly lowered her head in thanks.

"I also want to go. I don't feel comfortable with just you two."

Sylphid grabbed both of their collars, and cleverly tossed them onto her back.

"Hey-- You're going to rescue Saito, we also want to come help."

Then Guiche, Malicorne, and the other members of the Ondine Knight Corps also rushed over.

"You guys... while I appreciate your intentions, being too conspicuous is a bad thing."

"There's no way that Sylphid can carry that many people at once, kyui!"

"Oh, that's right..."

Guiche scratched his neck and then said to Louise with an earnest expression.

"Louise, Saito needs you."

"Leave it to me."

Louise nodded her head vigorously.

"It would be good if my ship could fly."

Colbert regretfully said, as he rushed over a little later.

"Really... how can this girl always be so willful!"

Said Éléonore while firmly glaring at Louise as she strode over. Louise ducked her head... but Éléonore next words were actually those of concern for her little sister.

"Be careful, chibi-Louise."

"Éléonore..."

With no way to stop the tears, Louise rubbed her eyes.

Mi-Ms. Vallière, please wait!"

Siesta, carrying a basket in her hands, trotted over.

"It's not going to work Siesta, there's no way to bring you this time."

"I know, this is lunch."

Siesta tossed the basket up.

"If you have some issues, it would be a problem if Ms. Vallière couldn't display her power."

"Thank you Siesta. I will definitely bring back Saito."

Catching the basket, Louise nodded her head.

"Fly at top speed."

Tabitha ordered.

"Kyui, kyui, leave it to me!"

Sylphid flapped her wings, and then a large cloud of sand expanded.

With a lot of her friends watching, Louise's group flew into the evening sky.

"That battle of words just now was brilliant, your Majesty. The fear was even making this old minister's body break out in cold sweat."

Walking out from under the sunshade, the old prime minister bitterly laughed, as he said this to Henrietta.

"A Queen capable of crossing swords with the Pope like this, you can truly say that you're one of a kind."

"I know I'll have to endure your scolding, Prime Minister Mazarin."

"No, on the contrary I believe your Majesty is completely reliable. If she could see your Majesty just now, Queen Marianne would also be at ease."

"Hearing your candid praise, it feels like this might be the first time."

"Oh, really?"

Mazarin began to act silly, after that he watched the backs of Louise's group soar across the horizon of the desert, riding on a dragon.

"They seem to be just like the previous magical guard team."

Mazarin said with a voice full of nostalgia.

"That group of legendary warriors that served my mother?"

"Yes. Narcisse, Bacchus, Sandillon... as well as Ms. Vallière's mother, Lady Karin. They were truly the most noble of the nobility, true warriors of the previous generation."

Seeing Louise's beautiful hair waving in the wind, Mazarin squinted his eyes as if they were dazzled.

The old prime minister who had served the royal family since time

immemorial.

"Ms. Vallière's mother once held some title, does your Majesty know it?"

"I remember she was called the Heavy Wind...."

"That's right. She was known as 'The Knightess of the Heavy Wind'."

At sunset... Fatima, released by Saito, crossed the bridge over the river that went through the city, and arrived at Eumenes' old district. The old district, crowded with buildings made of wood, was originally a place where many banished Elves lived. Fatima's clan, which had previously suffered banishment, also once lived here.

Just as she was going under the bridge, Fatima stopped in her tracks. She had once made an oath, before she avenged the enmity towards her tribe, that she would absolutely not return here again.

But she didn't know why, yet her footsteps very naturally brought her here.

"Why did I return here..."

Stopping at the entrance of the old district, Fatima shook her head. Now isn't the time to return here, I need to immediately return to the Party, and inform them of the matter of the demons....

At this time.

"Look who it is, isn't that comrade Fatima?"

Hearing a familiar voice, Fatima suddenly turned her head.

"Com-Comrade Aishmail!"

That's right, the person in front of her eyes... it was Aishmail along with some guards from the party.

"Are you starting to think about abandoning your homeland, Comrade Fatima?"

Aishmail squinted his eyes, measuring Fatima.

"No, I haven't..."

Fatima promptly straightened her back, and gave the party salute.

"I heard you were captured by the demons, I was very worried about you."

"Yes, really, I'm very sorry...."

Hearing Aishmail's words, Fatima exhaled.

But at the same time it brought up a question.

The meaning was Aishmail really knew she was held as a hostage, yet still ordered the attack and sinking of the vessel....

No, this is impossible... Fatima immediately swept away the doubt in her heart.

"So you came here, to indicate you've already killed the demons?"

Aishmail opened his mouth and asked.

"No... I was unsuccessful."

"Oh, you were unsuccessful, right?"

These words drew the eyes of Aishmail, and they became sharp as knives.

"What happened, Comrade Fatima. You not only didn't achieve the feat of killing any of the demons, you also shamelessly ran back here, right?"

"Ab, absolutely not..." Fatima rushed to try and explain.

Her faithful heart suffered Aishmail's doubts....

"It doesn't matter, this is just a small matter before the main event. We'll wait until after the fireworks to decide how to deal with you."

But Aishmail was actually very happy.

"Fireworks?"

"Correct, magnificent fireworks."

At that time Fatima noticed, the guards Aishmail brought with him were escorting a cart, and the cart was covered by a large cloth.

"Comrade Aishmail, what's the meaning of this?"

"It's a 'Jewel of Fire'." Aishmail grinned.

"'Jewel of Fire'? Why bring that thing...."

"What's to say, we want to obliterate the demons that are hiding in this city, of course."

"What...?"

Hearing this, Fatima was speechless.

The two people in front of her were actually talking nonsense....

"Par-pardon my boldness... if the power of 'Jewel of Fire' exploded, you wouldn't say the demons, but the entire city would be incinerated, right...?"

"Hm, you have a problem?"

"Eh?"

Aishmail's expression didn't change at all.

"As long as we can destroy the enemy demons, what does it matter to sacrifice a city or two?"

"Bu, but this city also has a lot of elves...."

"Comrade Fatima, this city doesn't have any elves."

"This...."

"In this city, all are traitors who broke the rules. They are not fit to be called elves."

"..."

This truly made Fatima speechless.

Her eyes immediately went dark.

Aishmail's expression was earnest, he truly thought to level the city...

"Ple-please reconsider! This, this is too much...."

"Oh? Comrade Fatima, don't tell me you've been influenced by the barbarians?"

"Ab-absolutely not!"

Aishmail shrugged his shoulders, and immediately on the faces of the group of elven guards, sneers were exposed, one after another.

"Sure enough, the blood of a clan of traitors flows in you."

"I-I'm definitely not a traitor!"

"Ah, your father's sister definitely said that as well."

At the command of Aishmail, the guards immediately grabbed Fatima.

"Rejoice, to dedicate the sacrifices you've made for the party until now, we'll let you enjoy these fireworks from a special seat."

Chapter 9: The Dreadful Keikaku^[3]

The sun set on the other end of the desert... even though evening had arrived, peace had not arrived in the city of Eumenes, on the other hand it got even more lively.

The cries from the stores along the road, and the lively hustle and bustle of the music. While it also was an elven city, it was completely different from the quiet atmosphere of Adyl, and was full of energy.

Returning to the hospital, Tiffania and Luctiana were already able to move around without assistance. According to the two elves in the hospital, although their wounds already had healed, they had used a lot of their strength - so if they wanted to journey across the desert, they were going to need to rest. Having said that, if you were talking about a human magician, it would take three days and three nights of casting water magic for the same result. The Firstborn Magic of the Elves is really powerful, thought Saito.

But really, they couldn't stay for too many days in this town. 'The Steel-Blooded Party' would not give up the search for Saito's group and if Louise already was in the area, they needed to meet up as soon as possible and tell her about 'The Holy Lands'.

"Tiffa, am I too naïve? She clearly hurt you very badly."

Saito asked while sitting on the chair next to the bed.

The two of them were in a hotel room that was arranged by Ali. Although the room wasn't very high class, the sheets were properly washed, and the room was completely clean. Tiffania was lying on the bed by the window, and the pajama wearing Luctiana, whose breathing sounded like she was fast asleep, was sleeping in the back bed.

"No, Saito. You are very kind. I believe that you didn't make a mistake, Saito."

Tiffania shook her head.

"Really..."

Saito's words lacked confidence.

At the time, he originally believed that releasing Fatima was the right thing. However, if the escaped Fatima tried to do something harmful to Tiffania again... not only could Tiffania be hurt again, she could even be killed... thinking this, he couldn't help but doubt whether or not his decision was correct.

"But it is a little unfortunate... I wanted to chat with that girl."

"It'll be fine if that day can come."

"Ah..."

Although her movements were small, Tiffania nodded her head energetically. Seeing this Tiffania made Saito believe that one day, maybe humans and Elves could peacefully coexist.

Right. It seemed like humans and Elves coexisted in this city. If only this dispute over the 'Holy Land' ended, it definitely would be a possibility.

When he returned his attention, he discovered Tiffania looking at the sunset through the window.

"Halkeginia forces have already arrived in the area."

Tiffania said.

"Ah, I think Louise and the others should be coming with them."

"This journey with me and Saito, will also end here."

Tiffa's voice was filled with a lonely tone... and then Tiffania shook her head in a rush.

"Oh, this... this, this kind of thinking is bad. With great difficulty, Saito can return to everybody's side, moreover, Louise is also really worried about you too, Saito.

"Tiffa..."

You could just see her blue eyes, with a warm expression, getting misty as she

gazed at Saito.

Seeing this, Saito's heart couldn't help but move.

"Saito, I'm very sorry."

"Huh?"

Saito couldn't help but be confused, suddenly hearing Tiffania apologizing to him. Apologizing to him, what was ultimately the reason... after thinking a moment, he thought of the issue.

"Don't tell me, you're still feeling sorry about making me your familiar?"

But Tiffania shook her head.

"N, no. Actually..."

Tiffania seemed to draw a soft breath to gather her courage, and then said.

"It's because I like Saito."

"What...!"

"Really I know this shouldn't be, because Saito already has Louise. But there really isn't anything I can do, I can't suppress my feelings..."

Tiffania said to Saito with a tear-stained expression.

"I like you, I like you to the point it's almost impossible for me to comprehend."

"Ti-Tiffa..."

Seeing Tiffania's suffering expression, Saito could only feel pain in the pit of his stomach.

The confused Saito promptly shifted his line of sight. If he continued to look at Tiffania's face... I'm afraid Saito would be unable to think first.

But this also wouldn't work... thought Saito. After all, Tiffania possessed incomparable charm. Although she was burdened with misfortune, she was also a strong and virtuous person, also adding to the complicated situation. Moreover, her temperament and manners were also good, and the most important thing of this complicated situation... this kind of girl has expressed

feelings of adoration to me... there isn't a man that wouldn't be affected. But...

"I know, Saito already has Louise."

"... Eh, ah."

Saito could only respond with an awkward nod.

"Therefore, I desperately thought about it and finally figured out how best to handle it."

"Oh?"

"This, my mother was also once a concubine of the Archduke."

"Con-concubine...!"

Tiffania seemed to say some rather incredible words.

"I can be Saito's number two, number one can be Louise."

"Uh, Tiffa, are you joking?"

Saito immediately asked. But Tiffania's expression was completely earnest.

"No, I've seriously thought about this. Moreover, I heard from my mom when I was young, the previous king of the elves had many wives and concubines in his harem..."

"Wait, wait a minute..."

The confused Saito immediately cut her off. Concubine, lover, number two... those type of words that only appeared in dramas, were incessantly hovering in Saito's mind.

Saito finally thought at that point, he'd never previously thought about this, but that could be considered a method. This way, Louise, Siesta, Tabitha, and Henrietta wouldn't be sad... perhaps. Of course, morally it couldn't be justified, can't be justified... huh, would it really be unjustified? Didn't I hear of a country on Earth that also allowed you to marry three wives and have four concubines...?

Although that thought flashed through his mind for a moment, Saito immediately shook his head.

The most important sweetheart that appeared in his mind... was the appearance of Louise.

"What was I imagining...?"

Of course he couldn't allow this kind of thing. Ever since the matter with Henrietta, he swore in his heart that he would never again make Louise sad.

Saito let out a little "Uh-huh".

"No, it's not alright! You can't be a concubine, it's not alright!"

Hearing that, Tiffania's face showed a sad expression.

"It's not alright?"

"Oh..."

Tiffania raised her head and gazed at Saito. Saito's heart almost couldn't help but waver from this, but Saito's heart was constant, and he shook his head.

"Why?"

Tiffania's pointed ears hung dejectedly.

Her clear, sea-blue eyes immediately became wet with tears.

"Uh, this..."

Seeing her show this sad expression, made Saito suddenly unsure what to do.

He didn't want to make Louise sad, but his way, he was just swapping Tiffania's sadness, was this okay? If he properly explained, maybe Louise would accept... no, but...

"Saito, I can't be your mistress?"

"Mis-mistress? Ti-Tiffania is this really what you want?"

"Oh, it doesn't matter, this is fine. I want to be Saito's mistress."

"Tiffa..."

Her face was very close. Tiffania's warm breath brushed Saito's cheek. Unaware of the room, and just as the two people's lips were naturally going to meet.

"Eh, you guys still want to do it at this time?"

Luctiana said in what seemed like a speechless tone, not knowing how long she'd been awake.

"Oi, I really hate this, hate it, hate it, this is why barbarians are barbarians!"

"Sorry for being a barbarian, I'm so really sorry.."

Saito, desperate to the point of silence, used both hands to apologize to Luctiana. Tiffania, who was shy to the extreme, hid in her bed and covered her head with her blanket.

"Truly, barbarians are barbarians! Affectionate regardless of the situation, kissing."

"What kiss!"

"How? Angry?"

"I'm sorry."

You can see Saito obediently kneeling on the ground for his crimes.

"It's alright, it doesn't matter. I also have an interest in those kinds of barbaric acts."

Luctiana shrugged and laughed.

And then suddenly she showed a serious expression to Saito and asked.

"So, the barbarian military forces are already in the area?"

Saito raised his head and nodded.

"It seems so."

"Are they coming to seize 'The Holy Land' or coming to retake you?"

Luctiana's face became a little grim. Tiffania, sensing the change in the atmosphere of the room, stuck her head out from the shelter of the blanket.

"I think it should be both."

"If we hand you over, will the army stop?"

"They should... no, I'm not sure."

Saito told the truth.

After all, the one that was coming was that Romalian Pope, no one knew what he was thinking in the depths of his heart. At least Saito could be sure, he and Tiffania were only props in the Pope's eyes.

"First, I'm helping you based on my own beliefs, and a little academic curiosity. But I don't want to help with the resurrection of 'the devil'. If your partner hurts my fellow elves, then I won't help you again."

As opposed to her previous attitude, Luctiana said this in total seriousness.

"I know."

Saito strongly nodded.

"I will do my best to prevent this war from happening, I promise."

It didn't matter about Romalia or the puppet Queen of Gallia, Henrietta definitely wouldn't actively help with the Holy War. Retaking the Holy Land required the possessors of the Void... Louise and Tiffania, of course, including Saito, didn't intend to be one of the Pope's thugs.

And he already knew the location of the 'Holy Land', so it wouldn't be impossible to find the magical equipment to stop the rising of the Halgekinian continent before starting a war with the elves. Of course, this would assume that the 'magic equipment' the Pope spoke of actually existed...

Luctiana closed her eyes and said.

"I know, I'll believe you for the time being. Then let's head to where the barbarian forces are, and we can talk after that."

"Thank you."

Seeing that Luctiana was willing to believe his words, Saito couldn't help but feel sincere gratitude.

At that time, the hotel room door suddenly opened.

"Hey, something bad is going on!"

Ali, who was originally supposed to leave town, burst into the room with a pale face.

"What's going on?"

"The 'Steel-Blooded Party' has surrounded Eumenes."

"What did you say?"

The surprised Saito shouted.

"Are you saying the fact we're hiding out here has been exposed?"

"You could also say that the girl you let go definitely tipped them off."

Ali glared at Saito, suspecting that he deliberately let Fatima go.

"That..."

"But their actions are too fast. In any case, the matter of us hiding in Eumenes must have already been exposed."

Luctiana spoke for the speechless Saito.

"All in all, it's better for us to leave town."

"Right, it would be bad if they went door to door and searched the hotel."

At that time, Ali's ears gently twitched.

"Someone is coming."

"What?"

Saito's ears didn't hear a thing.

But Ali's sharp eyes stared straight at the door.

"Ali, you shouldn't have been tracked?"

"I thought I was being careful."

"Tiffa, hide behind me."

Tiffania nodded her head.

Saito grabbed Derflinger, who was leaning on the wall. The runes on his left hand glowed, and Saito's senses immediately sharpened. Thanks to his gift, Saito could also hear the subtle footsteps, and it wasn't a hotel worker, it obviously was the steps of a well-trained person.

Saito drew Derflinger, and quietly approached the door.



At that time, the sound of the footsteps stopped in front of the room door. At that moment, Saito quickly opened the door, and put the blade of Derflinger to the throat of the person standing in front of the door.

"It, it's you...!"

Saito exclaimed to the person at the tip of his blade.

Tiffania covered her mouth with both hands, and her face also showed a surprised expression.

"Well, isn't that a really dangerous way to say hello, kid?"

A woman wearing a hood, bowed her head and laughed while looking at Saito.

She was known as the biggest thief in Halkeginia, known as 'The Crumbling Dirt' and the alias Fouquet.

"How, you know her?"

Ali asked Saito.

"Sort of..."

Although he was still on guard against his opponent, Saito first moved the point of Derflinger away from her. Although you could say he knew her, instead it would be better to say she was the target with whom several grudges existed. But since Tiffania, who admired Fouquet was here, Saito definitely wasn't planning to expose her past at this time.

"But Fouquet, how did you end up in this kind of place?"

While Saito was feeling surprised... Tiffania ripped off the quilt and yelled.

"Matilda-nee!^[4]"

"Oh, Tiffania, how fortunate that you're alright."

Fouquet relaxed her mouth and showed a smile and immediately rushed to Tiffania and embraced her tightly. Fouquet was tenderly patting Tiffania's beautiful hair, her face lacked even a trace of that grim thief's expression, and the two looked just like mother and daughter.

Although at first Saito still wasn't sure whether or not he should interrupt the

reunion of these two.

"Right, how did you end up here?"

But Saito still opened his mouth and asked Fouquet. Depending on her answer, he may still have to draw his sword on her.

"Eh, this is truly some welcoming. I even got commissioned by Romalia to come and help you."

"Commissioned by Romalia?"

This caused the images of the Pope and Julio to appear in Saito's mind. As it is, Saito didn't matter, but Tiffania was a possessor of the Void. If she was caught by the elves, they naturally would pay any price to rescue her.

"Anyway, I was definitely ordered to kill you two on the spot if the rescue failed."

"Is that right."

Fouquet grinned.

Saito couldn't help but sigh. He was already well aware of Romalia's methods, and getting mad now wouldn't help the matter.

"So it's like this, although I also want to peacefully meet and rejoice with you... but it's a pity, right now there's no time for us to reminisce. We have to immediately leave this city."

"Because the 'Steel-Blooded Party' is hunting you."

"If it was only that, it would be fine."

As Fouquet continued, she lowered her voice.

"They are planning to raze the entire city."

"What did you say!"

Saito suddenly opened his eyes.

"Hey, I can't pretend I didn't hear that, what's going on right now?"

Ali questioned Fouquet.

"When I infiltrated the navy, I heard the 'Steel-Blooded Party' boss say that

they prepared a large quantity of 'Jewels of Fire', and planned to blow you and this entire city to heaven."

"No, they can't..."

Hearing this, Saito couldn't help but be stunned.

A 'Jewel of Fire' engulfed Gallia's fleet in an instant, if they used it, they truly could easily burn this city to ash...

"If you don't believe me, you can stay here. But I'm taking Tiffania."

"But... quite a few elves also live in this city."

Hearing these words from Saito, Ali also nodded his head and expressed his agreement.

"Although the 'Steel-Blooded Party' is very crazy, they'd never murder their own kind?"

"Not necessarily, huh?"

This time Luctiana spoke.

Eumenes is a city made for doing business with barbarians, and originally was a place of banishment for those who broke the law. To them, hasn't it always been a thorn in their side!

"That's right... no, with the nature of Aishmail, it could definitely be this way."

Ali spoke as he stroked his chin.

"So elves are also like this, is this worthy of a 'civilized' race?"

"Don't talk like we are like them, we elves are a race that loves peace."

Hearing Fouquet's sarcasm, Luctiana made this kind of protest.

"Anyway, whatever. It's a fact that they've moved a large number of 'Jewels of Fire' into the city. Unless you want to get buried alongside this city, we need to leave immediately."

Fouquet pulled Tiffania's hand.

But Tiffania remained unmoved, and slowly shook her head.

"It's not alright..."

"Tiffania?"

"Because my situation has affected the entire city, it absolutely can't be like this!"

"I understand your feelings, you're a kind and gentle girl Tiffania."

Fouquet tried to persuade her.

"If we rely on the people here, basically, we're not an opponent for the elves. If you stay here, you'll just be another soul lost."

"But..."

"It's impossible." Saito stated this.

"Saito..."

"Only saving ourselves, but abandoning the whole city, how could I do such a thing!"

Saito's voice trembled. In his mind he recalled the businessmen involved in all sorts of activities on the lively street, the city people who happily cheered at Saito's amateur acrobatics, and the image of the elven children...

To unexpectedly want to raze this kind of city, that sort of thing absolutely couldn't be allowed. This city was the hope for peaceful coexistence for humankind and elves.

Saito tightly grasped the hilt of Derflinger. Light immediately glowed from the runes on his left hand, and his body gradually filled with power. This is the power that exists in the 'Gandàlfr' in order to protect his master. If he didn't have this power, if he was like he was before on Earth, he'd definitely run first. Everybody is afraid of death... you can assume that is definitely how other people will think.

But now there was already no way for him to escape.

Because in this world, he possessed power.

"Since it's like this, I'll have to step forward bravely."

"I'll think of a way to deal with the 'Jewel of Fire'. Tiffania, you get out of the city with Fouquet."

"I want to go too."

Saito was about to leave the room, but his arm was grabbed by Tiffania.

"It's not okay, this is too dangerous."

Saito shook his head, but Tiffania didn't let go.

"I beg you, Saito, I can't let you go alone. Maybe there's something that I can do, moreover I won't be separated from you again."

"Tiffa..."

As Tiffania gazed at Saito, you could see an expression that she didn't want to be separated.

This hurt Saito's brain. Of course, previously he had avoided a great number of problems with the help of Tiffania. Moreover at the 'Dragon's Nest' since he abandoned her, it was the only reason that she got life-threatening injuries... he couldn't experience the same kind of regret again.

"I know. Anyway, the entire city is surrounded, so escape is also dangerous."

"Saito!"

This time Tiffania broke out in a huge smile.

"Hey, I'm also going. My people are in trouble, I definitely can't ignore them."

"Of course, there's also me."

Ali and Luctiana both stood up.

"Really, do you also want to go?"

This caused Tiffa to frown anxiously.

"Don't worry. Although my fencing isn't up to your standards, I definitely have a degree of self-confidence in my abilities as an elf."

Hearing this, Ali sighed.

"It's pointless even if I stop you."

"Eh, but didn't you just fall for me a little?"

"Mm..."

This immediately made Ali speechless.

"Right, there is no way that I can disobey you, really! But I definitely can't let you go at random. If something unfortunate happened to you, I would be slaughtered by Lord Bidashal!"

"I love you, Ali."

Luctiana lightly kissed Ali's face.

Ali immediately blushed. Seeing those two's interaction, Saito felt that... Ali really was whipped.

"Are you guys for real?"

Fouquet said disbelievingly.

"Anyway, I could care less if you guys live or die, but Tiffania is not alright, I will take her and go."

Saying this, Fouquet prepared to separate Saito and Tiffania.

"Fouquet!"

"Matilda-nee, I beg you... actually, does Matilda-nee not want to try and save the city?"

"I'm definitely worried. But compared to this city, Tiffania, your life is much more important."

"I will protect Tiffa, absolutely."

Saito shrugged, and Fouquet said with a disapproving look.

"Meaning that I'm supposed to believe you?"

"Uh huh."

The two of them glared at each other like this.

Suddenly a tense feeling enveloped the whole room.

After a moment of silence...

Finally, Fouquet deeply sighed.

"Really, against the hero who defended against a 70 000 man army, saying

anything more would be a waste of my breath.

"Can we?"

"This is what this girl decided herself. But if anything unfortunate happens to Tiffania, I will have your life, understand?"

"So, where did these guys transport the 'Jewels of Fire'?"

Everyone spread a map of the city on the hotel table, and convened a battle meeting. The map was one stolen from the elven navy by Fouquet.

"Previously my uncle said that if you want to make the 'Jewel of Fire' explode, you would need an extremely strong elven power."

Luctiana said.

Since Bidashal once actually made 'Jewels of Fire' for Joseph, he naturally knew about this. Joseph used the 'Void' to cause the 'Jewel of Fire' to explode, but the 'Jewel of Fire' normally has a fairly strong enchantment. Relying on elven Firstborn magic, apparently it was quite difficult to destroy the enchantment.

"If you need this large a collection of power in this city... let me see, only here."

Saying this, The point Luctiana pointed at was a large building in the old quarter.

"The Great Temple of Sophia."

Apparently this was the place they used when they need to borrow a large amount of elven power, whenever they built irrigation projects, or if there was a long drought and they needed to pray for rain.

"Do we still have time?" Saito asked.

"Uh huh, if they want to make the 'Jewel of Fire' explode, they'll need a fairly large scale ceremony. Moreover, after the ceremony, there should be a little difference in time before the 'Jewel of Fire' actually explodes. It doesn't matter how crazy that fool is, but it is also unlikely that he plans to die along with this city."

"Then we can't take advantage of it right now and inform the people of the city, and let them immediately run for their lives?"

"There's not enough time, there's no time to do it like this. Besides, how can they believe that their fellow elves would do something like this?"

"If it's like this, we will first need to grab that fool."

Fouquet said.

"Really, we only need to infiltrate that 'Great Temple of Sophia'..."

"But there are members of the 'Steel-Blooded Party' all over the town, what are we supposed to do?"

At this point Ali interrupted the conversation to ask a question.

"There's really no way, I'll act as the bait."

"Fouquet, you're not serious, are you?"

"Yup, I am Fouquet, 'The Crumbling Dirt'. Don't worry, as if I'd get into a head-on fight with the elves. My expertise is in distractions."

Indeed, Fouquet's golem is unsuitable for infiltration and indoor combat. Thus, deliberately making a scene, and drawing everyone's attention would be much better.

"Okay, I'll ask you to do that."

"Leave it to me."

The battle plan was decided through that. Saito rolled up the map on the table, and calmly stood up.

"Let's go."

Everyone nodded, and pulled down the traveler's hoods that they were wearing.

Suddenly, Fouquet looked out the window and complained in a low voice.

"Actually, I was originally supposed to meet up with that fool... really, did he run off and go fishing in the end?"

Chapter 10: Raid

The twin moons, hidden in the clouds, reflected on the city. Hidden under a hood that a traveler would wear, Saito was hidden in the dark of the night, moving along the complex pathway.

The town of Eumenes sandwiches a river, divided into the old district and the new district. The Great Temple of the elves is located in the old district, where there are fewer pedestrians.

Hidden under Saito's cloak were Brimir's weapons that were brought from 'The Dragon's Nest' - he had Derf, the Japanese sword, pistols, and grenades... just like an action movie, thought Saito.

"Those horrible people, getting so many people mixed up in this."

Ali quietly said as he peeked at the road from the darkness of the alley.

On the dark road were elves everywhere the eye could see - of the 'Steel-Blooded Party', all wearing military uniforms. If they were found here, they would get caught before they ever got to the Grand Temple.

"We don't have any time, it doesn't matter if it's messy, should we break through?"

"No, wait a minute. Fouquet should be about to take action."

Saito said.

After lurking in the dark for a little while... the sound of a large explosion came to them from a distance.

Most of the mess that Fouquet caused came from the harbor warehouse street.

The elves walking on the road all didn't know what was going on, and started to get riled up. The 'Steel-Blooded Party' members that were originally looking

for Saito all ran towards the exploding warehouse street.

"This is it, run fast!"

Taking advantage of the chaos, Saito stealthily bolted through the dark.

On a road thick with transportation companies, they finally saw the appearance of the Great Temple after getting close to the outskirts of the old district.

The walls were covered in exotic Arabic patterns, and roofed with a large dome. The four corners of the building had finely carved minarets, and it reminded Saito of a Middle Eastern mosque that he had previously seen on the television news.

A solid stone wall surrounded the Great Temple, and in front of the gate were two elven guards that appeared to be members of the 'Steel-Blooded Party'.

There are no other people around the gate. According to Luctiana's explanation, the Great Temple was a sacred place for the elves, therefore almost no one would be close to that place.

And Luctiana whispered, "Crap..."

"What?"

"Those elves have already completely taken control, the ceremony seems to have already begun."

"It'll be okay if we're quicker..."

Tiffania said anxiously.

"What do we do about the guards? It could be trouble if they call for help."

Ali said.

"Let me go."

As Saito grasped Derflinger, that was hidden under his cloak, the runes on his left hand suddenly emitted light.

And then he quickly charged from the darkness of the building, and rushed towards the guards guarding the main gate like a gale.

"You, who are you... ahh!"

They only saw the flash of Derflinger's blade in the dark. It was too late for the guards to shout, then they were quickly cut to the ground by Saito.

"Wait, it's not that we didn't say not to kill elves. Although in this situation it's inevitable."

Luctiana complained at Saito as she followed him from the darkness.

"I used the back of the blade."

Saito rotated the blade edge of Derflinger.

No blood was flowing from the elves that had fallen on the ground, they had only passed out.

"...it's really pretty."

"But the next time won't necessarily go so smoothly. If we encounter a truly critical situation, I will prioritize Tiffa and my life."

Saito said this up front.

"I won't stop you. But keep the killing to a minimum."

"I know."

Saito nodded in response.

"Then let's charge in."

After Luctiana chanted magic, the lock on the main gate melted in the blink of an eye.

"Uh, uhhhh..."

Fatima was woken up by the feel of the cold, hard floor on her cheek.

Her head was still fuzzy. It seems like she was hypnotized by magic.

Her hands and feet were tied up with rope, and her body couldn't move. Fatima, tied up like a caterpillar, could only look at the surroundings in her line of sight. There was an extremely wide space covered by a large dome, and in the center was an altar with a large number of "Jewels of Fire" on it.

Aishmail and the elite guards of the 'Steel-Blooded Party' were gathered in front of the altar, and seemed to be holding a large scale ceremony. The power that resided in the Great Temple of the elves would gradually concentrate on the 'Jewels of Fire' that were stacked on the altar. Once the power of the elves saturated the Jewels of Fire, their enchantment would be destroyed, and the city would be razed in the blink of an eye.

"So when the time comes, the first one to die is me?"

Fatima gnashed her teeth forcefully.

It seemed like no one was aware that she had already woken up, Aishmail and the elite guards were concentrated on the ceremony.

But Fatima also knew that resistance was futile. Aishmail was a magic user that far exceeded her, and with her power alone there was no way for her to grasp the power of the elves here.

"Am I going to die here...?"

The half of her life, full of humiliation, flashed before her eyes.

Her entire family was banished from their town by the elves, and they were even persecuted by the companions of those elves in the place they were exiled to. She also failed to achieve the revenge she swore to her uncle, and even the faith she placed in Aishmail and the 'Steel-Blooded Party' was betrayed. As expected, there was no place in this world for the daughter of a family of traitors.

"Well, ladies and gentlemen. Let's put on a grand fireworks display for those stupid barbarians!"

Said Aishmail in a loud voice, standing in front of the altar.

At this time.

The roar of something exploding came from inside the Grand Temple.

As soon as they charge into the Grand Temple, Saito immediately threw out flash-bangs. The elves near the entrance lost their sight and hearing to the flash and the sound of the explosion, and turned into a giant mess.

After the flash disappeared, Saito and Ali rushed in. Effected by the explosion of the flash-bang, the body wouldn't listen to commands for several dozens of seconds. Taking advantage of the chaos, the two of them took down six elves in the blink of an eye.

"That's a really convenient magic tool, next time I'd also like to try it out."

Then Luctiana and Tiffania followed them in. After Luctiana chanted a spell, a ball of light floated from the center of her hand, and illuminated the corridor.

"The place where the Jewels of Fire are, must be the inner main hall."

Luctiana said.

"Okay, let's go."

Everyone rushed into the corridor.

When the group rushed to the end of the corridor, they arrived at a place that seemed like a hall.

With the intuition of Gandàlfr, Saito drew Derflinger and cut down several fire arrows that were shot from the dark.

"Tiffa, get behind me!"

Saito said, as he held Derflinger and stared into the depths of the dark.

"Well, so you guys didn't pack up and leave?"

Several elves in military uniforms appeared from the end of the corridor. As for the one standing in front, his physique was pretty good for an elf, and he seemed like a veteran of many battles.

"It's Admiral Salken."

Said Ali.

"Who is that person?"

"The Navy's best raider, he has attacked and sank many barbarian ships."

When the elven admiral saw Saito's face, he showed a ferocious grin.

"The bearer of the devil's power and the guardian, actually took the bait and came to die!"

Seeing him pull out a big scimitar, he charged straight at Saito.

Saito dodged the attack to the side, and then held Derflinger and chopped.

But the blow was blocked by the scimitar.

"You know your stuff, guardian of the devil!"

Salken began to chant Firstborn magic, and Saito immediately looked to dodge.

Three fire arrows appeared out of nowhere, and fired individually. Saito waved Derflinger and absorbed the flames.

"Partner, be careful, this guy is pretty powerful."

"Yeah, I know."

Saito reached up and wiped the sweat from his forehead. "Even if purely in sword skills, he is comparable to Agnes or Gallia's Castlemont. Moreover, he can also use powerful Firstborn magic, so sorry Luctiana, but I can't go easy on this guy."

So Saito opened some distance, and confronted Salken.

"I'll deal with the guardian of the devil, you guys grab the other people."

Crap... thought Saito. It doesn't matter that Ali is good with a sword, but if we want to protect Tiffania and Luctiana, there's no way we can fully display our skills. Moreover, the longer we fight here, the more reinforcements will arrive. That only leaves..."

Saito pulled a grenade from his arm, then threw it back to Ali.

"What is this? Fruit...?"

"A magic tools from my world, you bring it to your body. The way you use it is..."

Saito, picking up another grenade, used his mouth to pull the pin, and tossed it next to the wall.

BANG-----!

With the deafening sound of the explosion, the stone wall was crushed.

On the other side of the large collapsed hole, there were other corridors.

"I'll stay here by myself, everybody quickly head to where the 'Jewels of Fire' are stored."

"But, Saito!"

Tiffania shouted with fear.

"Don't worry about me. More importantly, all will be fine if we quickly stop the 'Jewels of Fire'..."

"I know, let's go."

Ali nodded, and urged Luctiana. Tiffania still had a worried expression as she looked at Saito, but seeing Saito give a thumbs up, she just nodded her head in response, and ran towards the hole in the wall.

"Don't think you can escape!"

Salken tried to chant a Firstborn magic attack. But Saito's foot kicked into his arm, and then he slashed with Derflinger.

Gandàlfr's quickness, like a gale, let Saito block Salken's sword and sent Salken staggering. Saito then took a step forward and hacked fiercely with Derflinger.

"One attack, and he's done for."

It's possible that fear spread to Salken, the elves beside him didn't dare chant spells. It also seemed that they didn't have the courage to jump into the flash of those two people's swords.

"As long as they're without a leader, in the end they're just a mob."

Not giving Salken the chance to counterattack, Saito continuously attacked. Seeing as the opponent was unable to handle Saito's onslaught, a tiny flaw was exposed.

Victory... the moment that thought came to mind, stabbing pain burst into Saito hand that was holding the sword. Then he saw the scimitar in Salken's hand suddenly spew fire.

"Well..."

Saito quickly absorbed the fire with Derflinger.

"You alright, partner?"

"Well... Derf, are you alright."

"Don't worry, I can still absorb."

Derflinger's tone sounded like he still had something left.

But... Derflinger's strength also had a limit. If he continued to absorb the powerful magic used by the elves, he could be damaged the same way he was last time.

"Partner, reinforcements are coming."

"I know."

The sound of many footsteps coming from the back of the corridor were approaching. At that rate, he would be surrounded in an instant, and at that time there would be no way to break through, even relying on the power of Gandàlfr.

"What's the matter, barbarian, you've stopped moving!"

Salken hacked with the scimitar in his hand. Saito changed to a one-handed sword style, and at the same time quickly pulled out an automatic pistol with his left hand. Aiming at the enemy's abdomen, he pulled the trigger three times.

But the bullets were deflected. Seeing the blue-white light through the holes in the military uniform, he was probably wearing some type of magic armor under there.

"Oh, barbarian weapons?"

Seeing this and shouting, Salken chanted some magic, and the pistol instantly heated to an extremely high temperature. Saito quickly threw the pistol, and watched the glowing red pistol explode in the blink of an eye due to the high temperature.

"Abominable!"

Saito can't help but feel anxious. Purely in sword skill, Saito definitely was

dominant, but besides sword skills the enemy also could use powerful Firstborn magic. Furthermore, Saito, who had no way to use defensive magic, he just had to be hit with a fatal injury... these unfavorable elements gradually caused Saito's sword to slow down.

And more importantly... Louise wasn't here.

If the master you want to protect isn't at your side, Gandàlfr's heart won't produce the slightest tremble "This attack will take your life!"

Salken tried to hack with the scimitar covered in flames. The attack revealed a major opening, so Saito couldn't help but take a step forward.

"This isn't good, partner!"

At this time Saito heard Derflinger's shout.

"Crap!"

At the same time as the thought, it was already too late.

The floor underfoot suddenly exploded, and it was a magic trap.

This explosion threw Saito's body high into the air, and then he fell heavily to the ground.

With an attack that tore a body apart, Saito couldn't help but open the hand that was holding Derflinger.

"Partner, hurry, quickly grab me!"

"De...rf..."

Saito, laying on his back, tried to hold Derflinger. But the impact from falling seemed to have caused a concussion, paralyzing Saito's fingers, and for a moment he couldn't move.

"It was a good performance, guardian of the descendant of the devil. I will be extremely generous, and let you die without pain."

Salken approached Saito, and placed the blade of the scimitar on Saito's neck.

"Ah, no... Sorry Derf, I'm calling it a day."

The feeling of the cold blade made Saito give up resisting. "Do you mean I

shouldn't play the hero now, one man alone taking the lead role...?"

As consciousness gradually blurred, the image of Louise appeared. With her peach blonde hair, crystal clear white skin, charming tea red eyes, and her small, cute chest...

"Louise... I really want to see you again, ahh, crap."

"Hey, partner! Don't give up! Quickly grasp me!"

Derflinger's call sounded further away... even if you say that, Derf, how can I, I can't move my hand....

The scimitar blade flashed just above Saito.

Just at this moment.

The image of Salken raising the scimitar disappeared.

"What...?"

Saito blinked his eyes... no, not disappeared. But like an invisible hammer, the attack from the side sent Salken flying.

And saw the elven admiral hit the wall and fall to the ground.

"Ho, how...?"

With his head pressed by pain, Saito struggled to stand up at the same time.

"That's truly a disgraceful appearance, trainee knight, Saito de Hiraga."

Hearing the familiar voice, Saito suddenly turned his head.

"It, it's you...!"

The golems created by Fouquet, rampaged on the warehouse street next to the docks.

They were overturning the docked boats, but were also free to grab the accumulated litter of boxes and barrels nearby. At the same time, Fouquet used more "Alchemy" to change the salt in the accumulated goods to gunpowder, and cause them to explode one after the other.

The elves of the 'Steel-Blooded Party' were aware of this commotion, and

were constantly gathering.

"Good, it's about time to run. The bait job is a total success."

Fouquet, operating the golems as she stood on the roof of a warehouse, said as she helplessly shrugged.

The power needed to chant spells had already run out. Even if Fouquet was more powerful, manipulating that many golems at the same time was hard work.

"I hope I can escape smoothly."

Fouquet's voice has already vanished. Although she was good at fleeing, but facing elves, could she really get away in the end..?

"Hey miss, you seem to have some trouble."

"Do you need some help?"

Looking back at the warehouse roof, She didn't know when this intriguing pair showed up.

One was wearing a black hat and the cloak of young aristocracy, the other is wearing a flirtatious dress, like a beautiful doll of a girl.

"Say, who are you two?"

Fouquet pointed her wand at the two. Although it seemed like they weren't elves, but they didn't feel like ordinary magicians.

"We're your peers, Fouquet, 'The Crumbling Earth'."

"Peers?"

"The Elemental Brothers... you should've at least heard the name?"

"It can't be..."

"The Elemental Brothers."

Of course she knew, it's a major name that was well known in the underworld.

And the real face of the unidentified 'Seven' was equally famous, the well known scavenger of the Knights of Nordparterre^[5]. Both cruel and cunning,

moreover it's said that he's never failed a task.

Rumors from after the collapse of the former king of Gallia, they changed into mercenaries...

"'Elemental Brothers', how did you end up appearing in this place?"

"We were also hired by Romalia. To catch the mixed blood Elf and hi... eh... uh, what was he called?"

"It's Hiraga Saito, Big Brother Bleu."

Right right, Hyraga Sayto ^[6], the content of the commission is to catch those two."

So this is what's going on... Fouquet finally understood. They were insurance in case Fouquet and the others failed, or that she would be their insurance is also possible.

"That pope really brought in a ringer."

"Incidentally, our reward is 300,000 common gold coins for four people."

"What did you say? That's even more than us!"

With 300,000 gold coins, that's enough to buy a castle with territory.

"That shows how much our skills are worth."

The young man half joked.

"Big brother Bleu, now isn't the time to joke, long ears are coming our way."

Bleu looked at the bottom of the warehouse, only to see that the elves had already surrounded the warehouse, and begun chanting Firstborn magic.

"There's really no way, Jeanette, I'm going to go cause a little trouble."

With a happy smile on his face, Bleu began to chant the 'blade' spell.

From the end of his wand, blue-white light stretched out like a tree. Compared to when a normal magician chanted a blade, the blade was thicker.

"What is this formidable magic power!"

"It's because we have a little secret."

Jeanette chuckled, and smiled towards the surprised Fouquet.

With that outrageously large 'Blade', Bleu was surrounded by chaos in the middle of the elven army, entering as if no one was there. Pressuring the entire formation all by himself.

"Ahh ~ Bleu, that guy's doing things without permission again."

At this time, new silhouettes appeared on the roof.

This time it was a burly giant, and a child that was about 12 years old, with exceptionally sharp eyes. The child was holding a giant, strangely shaped wind instrument.

"Big brother Damien, the two subjects don't seem to be here."

"Well, did we waste a trip?"

"Hard to say. Since our peer is here, there has to be a meaning, right?"

The child named Damien asked Fouquet.

"Of course. Concentrating the elves here, those two will be safer."

This is how Fouquet responded to the others, but didn't disclose that Saito and the others had gone to the Great Temple in order to stop the 'Jewels of Fire'. If the commission these guys received was the same as hers... if the signs were bad, they might not be beneficial to Tiffania.

"Heh, then let's hurry up and handle things here."

Done speaking, Damien pressed the wind instruments switch, and pointed the speaker on the front to the ground.

Accompanied by a low buzzing sound, the wind instrument issued a shock, and a magic light burst out from inside. As the light touched the ground, the shape of the slate laying on the ground immediately distorted, and became a swamp.

The elves surrounding the warehouse suddenly were caught in a swamp.

"Hey, big brother Damien, don't hurt me, I'm also stuck, okay!"

Bleu shouted with the upper half of his body exposed over the swamp.

"Sorry, the power of this 'constant alchemy' can't be controlled."

"This really is a crazy group of guys..."

Fouquet could only helplessly whisper.

It, it's you..."

Saito was suddenly speechless.

The magician who appeared from the darkness, with a wide hat, a hat with a feather, wearing a black cloak... and who previously was Saito's enemy during the Albion war.

This man assisted 'Reconquista', assassinated Henrietta's lover, the Prince Wales... and in order to gain the power of Void, toyed with Louise's heart.

The name that he wanted to, but could never forget.

Jean Jacques Wardes.

"Wardes... What are you doing here!"

Saito roared, forgetting the pain of his body.

"Did Mathilda not tell you? Romalia hired us to find and protect you who had been kidnapped by elves... and if there was no way, then we would need your lives."

"What did you say!"

Saito's heart couldn't help but tremble.

Not only Fouquet, actually she was also hired to help 'Reconquista' by this guy... in the end what is Romalia thinking? This guy killed the Prince Wales.

But Saito thought again. No, the Pope and Julio could do so. In order to regain the 'Holy Land', they definitely wouldn't hesitate to use any underhanded methods.

"The results are that you have such an embarrassing appearance. Simply killing you now may still be easier."

"You...!"

Holding Derflinger in his hand, Saito struggled to stand up. I do not want to... I don't want to let this guy see my embarrassing side.

"Well, are there any more ambushes?"

Salken, who'd fallen to the ground, got back up again.

Elven reinforcements constantly came from the back of the corridor.

"Surround the demons!"

Under Salken's order, Saito and Wardes were immediately surrounded by elven military forces.

"Partner, now doesn't seem like the time to quarrel."

"I know..."

Saito and Wardes separately raised their sword and wand, and then stood back to back.

"What's wrong? You're shaking, apprentice knight de Hiraga."

"It's none of your business."

The arm is still shaking, but Saito can barely hold on.

"Listen to me, I don't need your help."

"You sound so reliable."

Wardes cast a 'Blade' spell on his wand, and a vacuum blade was created at the tip of the wand.

"What's about Mathilda?"

"Fouquet? She's responsible for playing as bait in town."

"Really..."

Wardes voice seemed to be a little cool.

"In one breath, break through the siege, and act with me at the same time."



"Be less long-winded, and don't order me around."

"Do you want to die? Do as I say."

"Uh...!"

Saito was about to retort, but chose to stay silent. After all, he was very strong. Like Louise's mother, both served as the captain of the magic guards. He had certainly got through many life and death situations before.

Wardes took the lead, and holding the wand with the 'Blade', he cut towards the elven forces.

Saito then followed up, seeing the runes on his left hand emit light, and at the same time cut the two oncoming people.

"Don't close up, open up the distance and deal with them!"

Salken roared.

The elves turned to magic to attack the two, firing fire and light arrows from every direction.

Saito waved Derflinger, and the magic absorbing blade shined.

Then it became a melee.

Saito attacked the elf in front of him on the one hand, and kept Wardes in his line of sight on the other.

Wardes was really strong.

Facing the elven forces, he could still insert wind magic tactics to play with his opponent. His sword skill and magic power, both were even fiercer than when they faced off against each other in Albion.

"I can't lose to him!"

Following closely, Saito jumped, and in one breath arrived at the spot Salken was standing.

"Oh ho ho ho ho!"

The sound blades clashing rang, and sparks flew.

"Huh...!"

Salken was scared to the point of hesitation by Saito, as his movements from this time and before were like two different people.

The current Saito could clearly distinguish every one of his opponent's actions.

"Detestable, Gandàlfr's heart is actually shaking..."

"You really don't want to admit it, but you can't not admit it.", Derflinger said, as the trembling of the heart decides Gandàlfr's strength. Anger, sadness, love, joy... any reason will do, as long as it can cause the heart to move, the power will violently increase several times.

At present, the feelings whirling within Saito was wrath directed at Wardes, hate... but it was not only this. Indeed, there was another unknown feeling of passion moving Saito's heart.

"Detestable, the guardian of these demons!"

Seeing that he couldn't completely grasp Saito's movements, the anxious Salken violently hacked with his sword.

At this moment, Saito cut into Salken's arms, aiming at the armor protecting his chest, using all of his strength as he brandished Derflinger!

"What...!"

The wrists passed the feeling that they'd really been cut.

Salken's mouth opened and closed, struggling to try and breath, and then he knelt down on the ground.

The other elves began to panic seeing this.

This was a good opportunity to break through.

"Move quick, and follow me to the rear of the temple."

Wardes said.

"What?"

"Quick, I also don't want to be blown sky high by the 'Jewels of Fire'."

"Wardes, you..."

For a moment, Saito's heart hesitated.

"Absolutely do not die."

And then said to Wardes.

"I can never forgive you, who deceived Louise's feelings."

"That is fair. I also would like to report my hatred of your left hand."

"I can keep you company any time."

Then Saito stretched his legs and charged, and in a moment passed through the elven forces that were beginning to recover from their panic.

All the elves hurriedly tried to catch up with Saito.

But Wardes had already chanted a spell.

"Ubiquitous der Winde..." [7]

Upon completion of the spell, Wardes body then divided into eight people.

"Ubiquitous"[8]... The wind system, square magic that pulled Saito into a bitter struggle in Albion. The eight Wardes holding wands in their hands, were blocking the members, in front of the 'Steel-Blooded Party'.

"Come, ladies and gentlemen. The former captain of the Griffin Squadron, Wardes 'The Flash' shall accompany you for a few turns."

Chapter 11: Reunion

A fierce sword fight could be heard in the distance.

Tiffania was worrying about Saito's battle as she ran down the path to the main hall.

"We should be able to enter the main hall from here!"

Luctiana destroyed the lock with magic, and opened the door.

After passing through the outer corridor, they arrived at a garden in bloom. In the central park, there was a dome covered stone building, that being the main hall where the elves offered sacrifices.

The front of the door was firmly guarded by the elite guards of the 'Steel-Blooded Party'.

"It's the descendant of the devil, kill her!"

As soon as the elite guards saw Tiffania's group, they immediately started to chant spells.

Growing from the tree branches around the garden, countless rifles attacked Tiffania. However, those attacks were all stopped by Luctiana's 'Wind Shield'.

"Half-blood girl, be good and don't move from here."

Ali threw four or five scimitars that were hidden behind him in the air. The scimitars, which housed spirits, then danced in the air like butterflies, and headed towards the elite guards who were guarding the door.

This was Ali's specialty, 'Sword of Will'

The elves of the elite guard suddenly screamed in confusion, as the white blades shone in the darkness of night.

In the army, there weren't many 'knights' as strong as Ali. Additionally Luctiana, the niece of Bidashal, was a far stronger magic user than normal.

“The door is closed! Protect the main hall!”

A sound came from the darkness, and it seemed like the elite guards in front of the door chanted 'Stone Wall'.

"Damn, this is a problem..."

"Ali, the barbarian's magic tool?"

Luctiana said.

Ali quickly pulled out the grenade that was given to him by Saito.

"How do you use this? Do you not need to chant a spell?"

"Give it to me."

Grabbing the grenade from the hands of the bewildered Ali, Luctiana, who was imitating Saito, immediately pulled the pin, and threw it towards the stone wall.

"Cover your ears."

BANG-----!

After the astonishing sound echoed by, the grenade blew open the stone wall.

Several times faster than chanting Firstborn magic, the power was really amazing.

"A terrible power... it seems we can't underestimate barbarian technology."

Luctiana said, as she moved the hands covering her ears.

All the elves on the ground were moaning and groaning. Since the stone wall had absorbed the attack, it seemed like there were no life-threatening injuries, but it looked like no one could get up for the time being.

The entrance to the main hall was severely damaged from the impact of the explosion. Luctiana fired Firstborn wind magic, and the door was immediately smashed open.

"Let me go in."

Ali took the lead, and entered the interior of the main hall.

Then, by the magic light floating in the air, they saw an elf turn with an

exaggerated motion.

"My, oh my, who could this be, is it not the devil's descendant - and you traitors."

"Kyui kyui, I can see Eume... whatever that town is called!"

By the light of the twin moons, Sylphid flew at top speed through the desert night.

The far-away lights of the town that could be seen were gradually getting nearer and nearer.

"Saito is right there."

Louise couldn't help but shed tears again.

Saito was somewhere in that town...

To finally be able to reunite... it seemed like all the suppressed loneliness, and anxious thoughts up to now would come out in a cathartic burst. [\[9\]](#)

"Disgusting! Are you crying, Louise?"

"Who, who's crying..."

"You're not fooling anyone. Come here, wipe your face."

Kirche, with a smile showing on her face, handed over a handkerchief. Louise wiped her eyes after taking it.

After that, Sylphid flew to the sky over Eumenes.

"What's going on? Things are lively down there."

Kirche showed a surprised look and pointed to a corner of town.

They saw a fierce fire burning on the warehouse street near the docks.

And it wasn't an ordinary fire. Not only was there a golem causing trouble in the streets, but there were amazing explosions everywhere, and the flashes of magic were staggering. That magic was coming from the elves.

"Is that Saito?"

This is what Louise thought.

"Fly there."

Tabitha commanded Sylphid.

"Things are too messy. If we approach, we will get shot down!"

Sylphid desperately protested to her master.

"Don't worry, I'll think of something."

"Kyui... How Big Sis orders dragons is really rude."

Sylphid shouted, as she gave up resistance, then turned her head, and glided towards the port's warehouse street.

Facing a wind dragon suddenly diving from the sky, the elves mercilessly made Firstborn magic rain at Sylphid.

"Kyui kyui, don't do that!"

Sylphid circled over the docks while dodging.

Tabitha and Kirche respectively cast 'Icy Blast' and 'Fireball' to repulse the elves' magic.

At that time, everyone saw shadows on the warehouse roof.

Not elves... Louise recognized that person's figure.

"Fouquet! And those were the guys that attacked the house at Des Ornières!"

Louise shouted.

She remembered that group of four assassins were named the 'Elemental Brothers'.

"Are they trying to kill Saito again?"

Strong anger rushed to Louise's chest. "If it's really like this... I guess I'll give them a some of Louise's void", she thought, and so she pointed her wand down below.

"Wait a second! They seem to be fighting with the elven army."

This time Kirche opened her mouth to stop her.

"What?"

"Don't tell me those guys were hired by Romalia's leader?"

...That definitely was a possibility.

After all, the 'Elemental Brothers' were commissioned to assassinate Saito for money. If the price that Romalia offered was higher than the original client, it wouldn't be surprising if they disregarded them.

Having said that, actually assigning those guys to the search... That really burned Louise up.

Really, if things turned out wrong, they'd take Saito's life!

Sylphid landed on the roof of the warehouse.

"Huh? I was wondering who it was, and it was you guys!"

Fouquet said in astonishment.

"Fouquet, what's going on? Where are Saito and Tiffania?"

Louise asked.

"The group of elves called the 'Steel-Blooded Party' are trying to use a 'Jewel of Fire' to raze the entire town, and the kid and Tiffania are going to stop them."

"What did you say!"

Hearing this, Louise group looked at each other in surprise.

How did he get involved in this troublesome event...

"Where are those two right now?"

"Inside that large domed building."

Louise, with her tea-red eyes, stared at the building Fouquet pointed at.

"So Saito is right there."

"Louise?"

Kirche frowned in surprise.

Seeing Louise nod her head with determination,

"Tabitha, Kirche, I'll go and be right back."

"What?"

Before Kirche could ask, Louise began to chant a Void spell.

The next moment, Louise's figure disappeared.

"Welcome to the fireworks table!"

Aishmail, the party leader, stood in front of the altar, piled high with numerous 'Jewels of Fire', welcoming the arrival of Tiffania's group.

Ali quietly asked.

"Aishmail... do you really want to raze this town?"

"Of course. The rules of our party are very simple, it's just to kill the devils, to kill them no matter the method. As long as they are killed it is fine, therefore it is not wrong to kill the traitors. Of course, the townspeople who talk with the barbarians also have to be killed."

"That is horrible...!"

Tiffania was scared from the depths of her heart by person in front her, that was speaking of such horrible plans without a care in the world.

"This guy is crazy..."

"It's because of people like you that humans and elves can't live in harmony!"

"Silence, you traitor to the people!"

Aishmail started to chant a spell.

In one breath the floor of the building opened up, and rocks poured down like rain.

"Wind, become a shield to protect us!"

Luctiana immediately chanted the magic 'Wind Shield', in order to protect Tiffania.

Next Ali threw 'The Sword of Will' at Aishmail.

Six flying scimitars, all seemed to cut Aishmail's weak point... and at the speed of thought, the thrown scimitars suddenly turned around and flew at Ali.

"Gua-ha-ha-ha!"

Ali, who had suddenly suffered this attack, with no time to react, was badly cut.

"Ali!"

Luctiana used her body to protect the bloody Ali.

However, the flying scimitars relentlessly followed and attacked Luctiana.

As soon as Luctiana's back was cut, she screamed out in pain.

"Did you forget? Bidashal and I were comparable users of that." Aishmail mocked.

He seized Ali's elven power and used those powers against them, truly a fearsome user.

"Secure the entrance for me, do not let these demons escape!"

At Aishmail's command, the elite guards gathered at the entrance to the main hall, blocking their escape route.

"The ceremony will soon be completed. You can watch from there."

Saying this, Aishmail put his hand on the 'Jewels of Fire' on the altar.

Injecting elven power into the fire stones, a bright red light was emitted.

Ironically, seeing the beauty of that light grabbed the eye.

"That is the light of destruction..."

Tiffania felt desperate.

Both Ali and Luctiana were injured and couldn't move.

Currently the only one who could move was Tiffania... but her Void was different from that which Louise used. The only thing she could use was Forget magic, but Derflinger repeatedly warned her that this trick would have no effect on trained elves.

But now she didn't have any other choice, but just as Tiffania tried to cast

'Forget' on Aishmail...

"... I advise you to stop, it will only make you die faster."

Suddenly, a voice sounded in her head.

And it was a familiar voice.

"This voice..."

At that time, Tiffania noticed in the shadows behind the altar where the 'Jewels of Fire' were stacked, an elven girl was all tied up.

It was Fatima.

Why was she lying in a place like that...

"Don't look at me, I'll help you fight as much as I can."

I don't know what magic it is... Fatima's voice echoed in her mind.

After Tiffania had nodded her head slightly, she stared at Aishmail with her sea blue eyes and asked.

"Why do you hate humans so much?"

Aishmail sniffed.

"Do elves need a reason to hate barbarians?"

"... truly a sad person."

Tiffania whispered.

"What?"

"At the beginning, surely it was only a small flame of hate... but if you would continue to add fuel to your hatred, the flame would become hell fire and would eventually turn you to ashes."

"The devil actually pities me?"

Seeing Aishmail's angry face, he pulled out a pistol.

"This is a weapon used by the barbarians, and is the most suitable for the execution of traitors."

Aishmail fired once. As soon as a clear "Bang!" sounded, a bullet brushed

against Tiffania's ear.

"Woah..."

Red blood fell to the floor, and Tiffania crouched down as she clutched her right ear.

"Aishmail! If you kill that girl, the bearer of evil magic will be born again!" Luctiana shouted.

"It's fine to kill them again after they are resurrected, it doesn't matter how many times, we'll kill them, it's that simple."

Seeing Aishmail's burning eyes, Tiffania had no choice but to give up trying to persuade him.

"This guy, he's not going to listen to anything..."

"Next is the left ear. I can't stand that the evil blood of the devil shares the same characteristics as the Elves."

Aishmail aimed at Tiffania again.

At that moment, Aishmail's hand and wrist were burned by the pistol he was holding.

"What...!"

Fatima, who had broken the ropes, secretly chanted magic, and then crashed directly into Aishmail, causing him to lose his balance and fall on the ground.

Then Fatima desperately shouted, "Now, sweep the 'Jewels of Fire' off the altar!"

"Bitch, do you want to ruin the ceremony?"

Aishmail, burning with anger, got up and kicked Fatima in the gut.

Then he aimed the muzzle of the pistol at Fatima on the ground, and pulled the trigger.

The bullet hit her shoulder, splashing blood all around.

"You dare to go against me, I will not let you die painlessly."

"Stop!"

Tiffania charged past, and threw herself in front of the muzzle.

She then hugged Fatima, who knelt on the ground, trying to protect her.

"You...!"

The bloody Fatima's sea blue eyes widened.

"Unfathomably foolish... then, you two shall die together!"

The pistol's cold muzzle pressed against the back of Tiffania's head.

She couldn't help but close her eyes.

Just at that moment.

"Tiffa---!"

The elves at the entrance were sent flying at the same time.

You could see Saito charge into the enemy formation like a gale, waving Derflinger vertically and horizontally. The elite elven guards guarding the entrance to the main hall were immediately knocked to the ground one after another.

"You damn demon!"

Aishmail immediately pointed the pistol at Saito, pulled the trigger and fired.

"Too slow!"

Saito jumped over the small pile of elite guards, and shortened the distance in a single breath. Then he aimed at the wrist of the hand that held Aishmail's pistol, and then cut it off with Derflinger.

Aishmail's right hand suddenly flew into the air.

"Nnnn... Stones of anger, destroy my enemies!"

Aishmail jumped, and then chanted Firstborn magic. The stone pillar immediately softened, distorted, and became a huge arm grabbing at Saito. But Saito effortlessly dodged, and easily cut the arm, like it was made out of cream.

"What!"

Missing his right hand, Aishmail's expression distorted.

"Saito, you're okay!"

Tiffania cried out. Hearing her voice, Saito's heart relaxed for a moment. But at the same time he noticed that one of her ears had been shot, and rage immediately flowed into his heart.

"To actually dare to hurt Tiffa... I shall not forgive you!"

His heart trembled. This intense rage increased Gandalf's power.

Saito stepped forward, and approached Aishmail.

Aiming at Aishmail's shoulder, Saito quickly cut with his sword.

"Partner, you can't!"

Derflinger shouted.

The moment the blade was about to touch him, the air in front of Aishmail suddenly distorted, and Saito's body was thrown to the rear.

Suddenly hitting the floor hurt so badly that Saito almost fainted.

"Is it 'Reflection'?"

This was a Firstborn magic that Bidashal excels in, and is extremely tricky for Saito to handle since he lacked the means to deal with it.

At that time Louise was present, but now...

"Abomination!"

Saito stood up and charged at Aishmail again.

In theory, there were limits to the power of "Reflection". In fact, during the Battle of Tiger Road, the Tiger tank's main cannon penetrated Jörmungandr.

"It's useless, partner, hurry up and stop!"

"Woaaaaah!"

A cut using all the strength in his body, was still easily reflected. Moreover, the greater the power, the more it was multiplied by the strength of the reflection, and this time Saito bounced into the wall.

"Ah... hoo...!"

"Ha ha ha, die! You familiar of the Devil!"

Sad laughter came from Aishmail, and he chanted Firstborn magic. Several stone arms stretched out from the ground, and everyone watched helplessly as they would flatten Saito, whose body lay still on the ground.

At that moment, the huge stone arm exploded in front of Saito, and broke apart.

"What...?"

Saito, still laying on the ground, looked up in amazement.

Reflected in Saito's eyes... someone with pink hair.

A fluttering cloak with a lily crest, tea-red eyes, crystal clear snow white skin...

An awe-inspiring figure holding a wand, like a solemn and sacred goddess.

"Louise...?"

Saito pinched his cheek, suspecting that he was dreaming.

Truly incredible. Why did Louise, who should be with Henrietta's group, appear here...?

But Louise truly was right in front of his eyes...

"It seems we caught up," Louise said.

"Saito, your master has come to see you."

At that moment, Saito's eyes overflowed with tears. He forgot not only the current situation, and his body's pain, but he forgot everything, and hugged Louise.

"Lo, lo, Louise!"

"Wha-wha... don't do that in such a place!"

A blushing Louise tried to push away from Saito. But Saito held on tightly, and refused to separate.

"You, you're real? You're not a ghost..."

The uneasy Saito said, while staring at Louise's petite body.

Touching, not hallucinating...

Then Saito sniffed - indeed, that was Louise's smell.

"Di-disgusting, Saito, really!"

Louise's face had both an angry and troubled expression, and she constantly resisted by wriggling her body. In order to clearly confirm, Saito touched all over Louise's entire body.

Then he touched her chest... only then was Saito convinced.

"It's true."

"What do you mean!"

Saito was kicked flying by an angry Louise.

"Oh... it's not a dream, it's really Louise."

Saito couldn't help but be moved to tears.

Although he was staggering and stumbling, he still tightly clutched Derflinger.

Just being beside Louise... just like that, the energy filled his entire body.

"Oh, Louise..."

Tiffania also showed a confident smile.



Louise faced Aishmail, and pointed her wand at him.

"Good, you noticed."

Aishmail angrily ground his teeth, and stared at Louise with hateful eyes.

"You damnable devils, you should die together!"

Holding his single hand to the ceiling, he started chanting a particularly powerful Firstborn magic.

"Saito, you're responsible for protecting me!"

"Coming!"

Saito energetically responded to Louise's shout, advancing while holding Derflinger, becoming like a gale. Obviously, he had already been scarred, tired, and he had almost reached his limit.

At this point, Aishmail's Firstborn magic had already completed. Arms, larger and thicker than before, emerged out of the floor one after another and attacked Saito. But their movement was extremely slow.

No, no... Saito figured it out at that moment.

The reason was that Saito's senses were far more focused, more sensitive than before.

The voice of Louise chanting magic behind him gave Saito great courage. They watched as Saito cut off the giant stone arms one after another without stopping. Becoming his master's shield, fighting for time to chant magic... Only in this role could Saito bring out 100% of "Gandalfr's" power.

"This is the best situation, partner."

"Derf, I feel like I'm invincible!"

Saito shouted as his sword flashed as he wielded it.

"How is this possible...!"

Aishmail couldn't help to be stunned as his expression distorted.

Louise closed her eyes, chanting void runes. Saito was covering Louise's heart, protecting her feelings of peace and happiness.

To finally meet with Saito again... This elated feeling led the power of Louise's once flagging spirit to again overflow.

At this time, Louise completed the Void magic:

---"Dispel'."

The tip of her wand flashed, and at the same time a faint glow came from Derflinger's blade.

"Go now, Saito!"

"Oooooooooohhhh!"

After Saito swept away the previously created stone arms with the sword in his hand, he jumped to Aishmail, with Derflinger in his hand, and chopped into the top of the flustered Aishmail's shoulder.

With "Dispel" on the blade, it was easy to cut through the barrier-like "Reflect".

"Oh no...!"

Derflinger's blade cut into his shoulder, and Aishmail fell to the ground.

Saito quickly retrieved his blade, and prepared to attack with the back of it.

At that moment.

"Curses... I actually lost to a mere barbarian!"

After that, Aishmail reached in with one hand and pulled something out, then pointed it at Saito.

"What's that?"

For a moment, Saito thought it was a pistol.

But it wasn't. In a transparent sphere, a beautiful red light glimmered.

It was a fist-sized "Jewel of Fire".

"What...!"

Saito suddenly froze in place.

Aishmail laughed.

"He, he-ha-ha, I don't need you to do anything, barbarian!"

Aishmail then held the 'Jewel of Fire' high, and whispered a spell.

And small cracks appeared on the surface of the Jewel of Fire, and the light dramatically increased.

"Wha-what do you think you're doing?"

Saito asked, holding Derflinger aloft, as a bad feeling suddenly welled up in him... Luctiana, seeing this as she lay on the ground, shouted with a pale face.

"You... don't tell me you're trying to take us with you!"

"What did you say?"

"Heh, heh, hahahahaha!"

Holding high the shining 'Jewel of Fire', Aishmail laughed piercingly.

Being deterred by the strange atmosphere, Saito couldn't help but back off.

"Don't tell me that you can make a 'Jewel of Fire' explode without a ceremony!"

"If you just want to make one of them explode, then the power of an elf is sufficient!"

Having said it... Saito just thought of it.

It seemed like Sheffield, the Mjöövitnir, also said that it wouldn't be difficult if you just wanted to make the Jewel of Fire explode... In fact, she died with Joseph by making a Jewel of Fire explode, without the power of the "Void".

Obviously, in order to kill Saito and the others, Aishmail would disregard his life and those of the elite guards.

"You, are you crazy...?"

This sentence almost stuck in Saito's throat, but there was nothing he could do. Even if he killed Aishmail here on the spot, it wouldn't stop the 'Jewel of Fire' from starting to react.

"Comrade Aishmail, what are you doing?!"

"Do-don't tell me you intend to bury us together with you?!"

Just then, the elves that had been knocked down by Saito discovered Aishmail's intentions, and let out horrible shrieks.

"Do you not sincerely hope that the demons will be eliminated? You and I will all become national heroes, and will be forever celebrated by our descendants in elven history!"

A sad smile showed on Aishmail's face.

The Jewels of Fire piled on the altar began to shine violently. They seemed to resonate with Aishmail's Jewel of Fire, and once the small one burst, most of the other Jewels of Fire would explode along with it.

"Such a pity... Even if you do this, it will only increase the chain of this world's hatred, and nothing more."

Tiffania whispered.

"You're wrong. As long as the barbarians disappear from this world, the chain of hate disappears."

Bzzzzz... The Jewel of Fire began to shake. This was the countdown to destruction. Cracks in the enchantment gradually spread, and soon the power sealed in the 'Jewel of Fire' would explode.

"I don't think so!"

Louise quickly tried to cast the spell, "Dispel".

"Miss, that is useless.", Derflinger said.

"Why?!"

"The reaction has already begun, so now even using 'Dispel' will do nothing."

"Then I shall use 'Explosion' and blow them away."

"That's the worst option, the Jewels of Fire will explode."

"In the end, what should I do?!"

Louise roared.

"Ha, ha, hahahahahahaha! Long live the 'Steel-Blooded Party'!"

Aishmail's laugh was full of madness.

"Damn..." Saito cursed. The Jewels of Fire were already on the verge of exploding, with no time to escape...

Just then, Tiffania suddenly got up and whispered.

"...What is that sound?"

Tiffania didn't know where the beautiful melody her ears heard came from.

A melodic tone clearly passed by, bringing with it a feeling of nostalgia.

Even if the situation was extremely critical, Tiffania couldn't help but involuntarily revel in the melody.

Where did it come from...?

"What is it, Tiffania?"

Louise, checking to see if the situation was wrong, asked Tiffania.

"Hey, Louise, can you not hear this sound?"

"What?" Louise wondered.

"Wait a moment, now isn't the time to say this..."

It seemed like neither Louise, nor Saito heard it.

"Only I hear this mysterious melody..."

Just then, Tiffania remembered the true melody.

"This is a Void spell..."

This melody, she heard it when she was a child, it sounded just like that music box.

Hearing Tiffania's whisper, Louise was surprised.

"Tiffania, you shouldn't..."

Louise hurriedly removed something from her cloak.

It was a shabby little music box... 'The Founder's Music Box'.

At that time, the 'Wind Ruby' on Tiffania's hand resonated with 'The Founder's Music Box', and sang a song, and runes engraved themselves into Tiffania's mind.

"Tiffania, you learned a new void spell!"

Tiffania nodded her head in response.

The void runes became a beautiful song, and gradually entered her body...

The effect the new void produced, Tiffania knew it very well.

It is said that the Void will be given to the bearer when they need it.

This is indeed a fact.

"If I use this magic, maybe this will be a turning point..."

But if I use it now, there's one thing that's really going to worry people.

Thinking like this, Tiffania moved to Saito.

Two people's eyes met.

Saito felt slightly unsure what was going on... but then suddenly he understood the meaning of that look.

That's right, right now Saito was Louise's familiar, and at the same time also Tiffania's familiar. And the final familiar, 'Lífprásir', the supplier of void power...

Tiffania's newly awakened void, a power far beyond the power of 'Forget'.

If I use this spell, what will happen to Saito's body...

But Saito's gaze stared straight at Tiffania, and then he shook his head.

Use it... Saito's eyes told her this.

Tiffania quietly nodded, and decided to respond to Saito's realization.

Therefore, Tiffania turned to face the crazily laughing Aishmail, and, holding a magic wand, began to chant the Void spell.

Eorū Sūna Eis Yarnsaksa

With that beautiful sound, Tiffania made the Void runes sound like a song.

That rune was very similar to the one for Louise's 'Explosion'.

Os Beok Ing Le Rad

Ansūr Yur Tiel Kano Tiel

But this wouldn't let the target object explode, but instead it was a spell that made all things in the world 'Forget' their reason for existing. Although Tiffania had never been introduced to the concept, she understood it.

Gyof Isa Son Beokun lel

The spell finished.

Tiffania waved her wand.

-- "Decompose."

The Void magic system designed by the Founder, would interfere with the tiny 'particles', that constituted matter. The void that Tiffania chanted didn't simply destroy the 'Jewels of Fire', but the essences that the 'Jewels of Fire' were composed of were decomposed into 'primaeva^[10] particles', the origin of all matter.

It didn't leave a trace in front of them. Even the fact that they existed in the world disappeared without a trace.

In a sense, this magic was the ultimate 'Forget'.

"Ho-how is this possible...?"

Facing the altar where the Jewels of Fire had disappeared from, Aishmail knelt on the ground in dismay.

The elite guards of the 'Steel-Blooded Party', having witnessing the power of Tiffania's Void, lost their will to fight, and dropped their weapons. That kind of evil magic that could make 'Jewels of Fire' disappear in an instant... if it was used on them, how frightening would that be?

To vanish from the world without leaving a trace. This fear could be even more frightening to the elves than mere death.

"You did it, Tiffania!"

Louise happily shouted.

"You did it, Tiffa..."

Saito also looked to Tiffania... but suddenly collapsed to the floor.

"Saito?"

This puzzled Louise.

But then she noticed that something was wrong, and rushed to Saito's side.

"Saito! Dammit, what happened, Saito?!"

"Lou... ise..."

Saito, at that moment, already seemed to be unable to hear Louise's panicked shouts.

The 'Lífþrasir' runes glowed intensely and seemed to cause burning, intense pain to Saito.

No, if you still feel pain, maybe it's alright, because it means that you're still alive. But this feeling, like your very existence is gradually being taken away.

"Ahhh, damn, finally... finally reunited with Louise..."

Only listening to Louise's cries gradually fade away... Saito finally lost consciousness.

Epilogue

Saito shook his head as he woke up... and found himself lying in a large bed.

What he was wearing wasn't his usual jacket, he didn't know when he put on these comfortable pajamas that he now was wearing.

"...? How did I get here?"

With pain clouding his mind, Saito tried to recall what had happened to his body.

Right, at that time... Tiffania used that amazing Void, and eliminated the Jewels of Fire. And Saito, as the bearer of the void's 'magic power supply', didn't get a chance to enjoy the pleasure of reuniting with Louise, and fainted.

After that he had no memories...

"Speaking of here, shouldn't it be this..."

Saito looked around the room.

That's right, this was the familiar cabin in the 'Ostland'.

"Why am I on the 'Ostland'?"

When the frowning Saito decided to get up from bed, a feeling full of elasticity came from his hands.

"Wha-what's this...? Lou-Louise!"

"Uh, um... um..."

Then he saw Louise kneeling on the ground, sleeping on a pillow next to Saito.

And currently making cute breathing sounds...

Both her cheeks covered by pink hair, crystal clear white skin, and the small ups and downs of her chest.

The lover he had thought of constantly, was now in front of his eyes.

Seeing Louise's figure, Saito temporarily calmed down.

But at the same time, he was also full of doubts.

How did Louise get here...?

While Saito was thinking this, Louise yawned and woke up.

"Um, Sai... to...?"

Louise first rubbed her sleepy eyes, and then, after a bit, she jumped up in shock.

"You're awake, Saito?!"

"Oh, Louise!"

Then she hugged Saito.

"That's great... I thought that you wouldn't wake up again..."

"Louise, don't tell me you've been taking care of me since then?"

"What?"

Hearing Saito's question, Louise's face instantly blushed.

"Wha-what? You slept for two whole days without waking up, I just..."

Louise hastily waved her hands, and tried to divert the conversation.

Seeing Louise acting in this manner, affectionate love rose in Saito's heart.

"Anyway, I slept for so long..."

"Yes, you've been dreaming, talking in your sleep..."

"What happened to us afterwards?"

Saito asked Louise.

"The guys trying to level the entire town were all arrested by the patrol squad that heard the news, this includes the one named Aishmail. It seems that he is be severely punished by the elven council.

Then Louise began to explain the ending to the Eumenes incident.

Fearing Tiffania's Void, the elves of the 'Steel-Blooded Party' all had no will to resist, and were all obediently captured. Afterwards, Louise and the others

joined the 'Coalition Army for the Restoration of the Holy Lands' and sent the fainted Saito to the 'Ostland'. The injured Ali and Luctiana appear to have been put up in the Romalian medical ship.

"Tiffa? Is she on this ship?"

"She already went to the Romalian medical ship."

At first, Tiffania took care of Saito with Louise. But after Saito was stable, she left the work of looking after him to Louise, and was instead taking care of the elven girl residing on the Romalian vessel.

It's Fatima, Saito thought. Although the long-standing hatred couldn't be dissolved overnight, Tiffania's inner gentleness would certainly melt her heart.

"Anyway, this is great..."

Looking at the ceiling of the room, Saito said this.

"We all succeeded in saving Eumenes."

After Louise finished, the room was suddenly enveloped by a wonderful sense of silence.

In fact, there were many, many things that he wanted to say, since the two of them had been separated for so long. But when the time came to talk, he didn't know what he would say to Louise.

During this time, the two of them just quietly looked at each other.

Then, the two of them, as if by coincidence, slowly brought their lips together.

"Mm..."

And like this, Saito wrapped his arms around Louise's shoulders and embraced her to his chest.

A warm feeling gradually filled Saito's heart...

I really want to feel all of Louise... to touch all of Louise.

Saito, thinking this in his heart, touched a fingertip to Louise's tiny chest.

Saito could feel Louise's body twisting slightly, but there was no particular resistance to his movement.

After the two slowly separated their lips, Saito whispered a question in Louise's ear.

"Can I?"

"...No, it's not okay."

Louise answered in a small voice.

"So, sorry..."

"Oh, I rushed it..." Saito thought.

Every time it's like this, I'm truly useless. I get too carried away, and she may be disillusioned with me...

"No. Draw the curtains. Other people are embarrassing."

Seeing Louise say this with a vivid blush, and constantly revealing her beautiful legs as they twitched from beneath the quilt.

"Wha-what, it was this...?"

Saito exhaled.

"Don't worry Louise, we're in the sky here, nobody will see."

"That's not the issue, but the atmosphere."

Louise said, as she blushed.

"I know."

Then Saito pulled the ship cabin curtains closed.

"Th-then..."

Saito swallowed nervously and gently touched the small bulges on Louise's body.

He saw Louise tightly close her eyes.

God, I really can't take it. Ho-how can m-my master be so cute...

"Ah, also turn out the lights."

"Lights?"

There was a magic lamp next to the bed.

"No, I don't want to turn it off."

But Saito rejected it like this.

"Why?"

"I want to always see your face."

"Saito..."

The blushing Louise heard Saito and shyly lifted her head and looked at him.

Seeing her looking so cute, Saito finally couldn't stand it.

Saito separated the uniform, and used his hand to gently poke that tiny chest, and Louise could help but exhale a sweet "Ah..."

When Saito prepared to undo her blouse button...

"Ah~ Ah~ this is the notice from the wind fairy. You two shouldn't overdo it."

"Whoa--!"

At that moment, Saito rolled off the bed scared.

The sound came from the sound tube located on the ceiling of the cabin.

"Ah, in the beginning the wind fairy wanted to turn a blind eye as well, since it is a touching reunion. But you two are too much... isn't there a limit to my patience?"

The wind fairy's voice was trembling... it was Malicorne.

"You, you, you heard it all!"

"Well, the sound tube is connected to all of the cabins. Speaking of your voice, even the bridge can hear it crystal clear. How are you two? Are you also playing with the 'little lemons' in the sky?"

"Wha-what's that!"

Louise shouted towards the sound tube.

""Draw the curtains. Other people are embarrassing'."

"Wah!"

Hearing Malicorne's nauseating voice imitating her, Louise flushed, and kept

twisting around.

"Ah, also turn out the lights'."

"Shut up!"

"I want to always see your face'."

"Y-you...!"

Just when Saito wanted to protest.

"What, what? What's the fuss...? Oh!"

At this point, the cabin door was opened by Kirche, Tabitha, and Siesta together.

Seeing that the blouse on Louise's body was a mess, Kirche grinned.

"To be in such a rush, and in broad daylight, I was worried sick about you."

"Ms. Valliere, do you think you can cop a feel, this is too much!"

Even Siesta complained.

"No, no... No!"

Louise hurriedly started sorting out her messy clothes.

"Siesta, Kirche and Tabitha... Did you all come for me?"

"Ah, Saito... really... That you're safe is really good..."

Siesta sighed with tears, and rushed to Saito's bed.

"Damn, let go, you silly maid!"

"Do you have a question, Ms. Valliere? Didn't we agree that you would lend him to me three days in a week?"

"It's two days, two days! Don't arbitrarily increase it, okay!"

Louise and Siesta immediately started to quarrel.

The interaction between these two was very memorable, and finally let people feel like they were back.

"Welcome back."

Tabitha said in a small voice.

"Oh, I'm back."

Saito put his hand on Tabitha's head, and Tabitha suddenly blushed to her ears.

"Hi, is our vice-captain really awake?"

This was the noisy sound of footsteps coming. A large number of people poured into the room, there was Guiche, Reynald, and Gimli... it was the guys from the Knight Corps of the Water Spirit.

"Guiche... and everybody!"

"Great, Saito. Everybody was really worried about you earlier."

"I'm really sorry, making everybody worry."

Saito and Guiche hugged each other, then Saito hugged every member of the Knight Corps of the Water Spirit. Even Malicorne, who came up late, hugged Saito so tight that he begged for mercy.

"Oh, Saito, it looks like you seem to be awake."

"Mr. Colbert!"

Saito shouted out.

"Even the teacher came?"

"Uh, that you're fine is great, Saito."

All his friends from school suddenly filled the room where Saito was.

This made Saito's eyes brim with tears. "Everybody has faced danger and come to the elves country for me and Tiffania."

But Louise, whose time alone with Saito had been disturbed, seemed dissatisfied.

"Really, what...?"

Guiche and the other surrounded Saito, and talked about how they rushed to the capital of the elves.

The outbreak of a large battle with the elven fleet in the outskirts of Adyl, and

Louise launching a large-scale 'Explosion'.

When he heard that the 'Ostland' had crashed into the tower of the elves, Saito said with a wry grin: "Don't be so reckless!"

"That big battle with the elves was truly unbearable."

"I already seen enough Firstborn magic to last me a lifetime."

Malicorne said.

"Speaking of Saito, what kind of adventures did you have in the land of the elves with Ms. Tiffania?"

"Oh... We..."

This time Saito told everybody what happened after he was abducted by the elves.

Imprisoned in the elves' tower, almost having his mind taken by the drug, meeting Bidashal in the tower, and with the help of the exceptional Luctiana, he escaped the tower with Tiffania. And the fight with the water dragon, and the fact that Derf still was alive and then there was the matter of escaping into the 'Dragon's Nest'...

Speaking to here, Saito suddenly remember something.

He should have said something this important... why would he forget.

"Right, 'The Holy Land'! The 'Dragon's Nest' is the 'Holy Land'!"

Saito shouted.

"..." Everybody looked at each other.

"What, are you telling me that nobody is surprised?"

Colbert told the confused Saito.

"Saito, this ship is currently flying towards the 'Holy Land'."

After that, according to Colbert, there was a temporary peace agreement between Halkeginia and the elves.

"Louise's 'Void' annihilated all of their fleet, as well as directly penetrated the elven citadel, Adyl, which seemed to have a major impact on the elves. I heard

that the county's 'Steel-Blooded Party' opposed peace until the end, but when it was revealed that the Aishmail, the Party leader, tried to level an elven city with 'Jewels of Fire', they immediately became a target for public criticism."

"On the other hand, The Pope of Romalia gave command of the majority of the ground forces of 'Coalition Army for the Restoration of the Holy Lands' to Albrecht III and they retreated to the border region of the Sahara. The Pope then boarded the 'St. Mark', and with the bearers of the void, headed to the 'Holy Land'."

"...While I was captured, it seems that something very serious happened."

That night, Saito lay on the bed in the cabin, both rolling over and talking.

Lying beside him was Louise wearing a nightgown. She complained the noise of the ship systems were too loud in her room, and that she therefore couldn't get to sleep, unless she could spend the night in Saito's room.

"But then, as long as you can find the magic device in the 'Holy Land', then everything is solved."

"Saito, do you really think that there is a magic device in the 'Holy Land'?"

To Louise's question, Saito shook his head.

"I don't know. I never saw anything like that in that dragon's nest..."

"Are there some necessary conditions? For example, like it won't appear without the four and four^[11] gathered."

"Who knows? But I've always felt that the Pope and Julio both have different plans."

Just when Saito contemplated things with a serious expression...

"Saito..."

"What?"

Louise got close to Saito's side.

Doing this, Louise felt very relieved.

Louise thought that the place where she belonged was here.

"I-I always wanted to see you..."

Louise frankly revealed her feelings.

If it was the previous Louise, she wouldn't be able to so frankly express her feelings in front of Saito. She would always find a reason to hide her thoughts.

But it was different now. In the courtyard of Versailles, after seeing each other as naked as newborns, she decided to no longer maintain that meaningless restraint.

"Well, me too, there wasn't a moment that I didn't think of Louise."

"Really...?"

Hearing those words, Louise couldn't help but be embarrassed.

The person I like is beside me... Like this, I feel so happy.



Louise gently held Saito's hand. As hinted, Saito gently lifted Louise's chin.

Two people's eyes closed, and their lips overlapped. Like making up for the loneliness of the previous isolation, a selflessly affectionate kiss. After kissing for a time, Saito's hand moved to fondle Louise's tiny chest.

"Can, can I touch?"

Saito haltingly asked.

Louise shyly nodded.

In order to avoid the wind fairy being a hindrance again, Louise has already plugged the sound tube tight with a pillow. She also didn't have to worry about Siesta interrupting. Although she repeatedly urged such things as 'it is only for today', 'we agreed on two days a week' or similar things, she also promised to leave the two of them alone today.

Watching him as Saito separated her gown and touched Louise's chest, his hand slightly trembled.

Really, Saito looks so nervous.

Louise keenly felt that.

But... maybe I'm more nervous than Saito is...

"Wan-want to touch."

Saito's voice couldn't help but come out high-pitched.

She felt Saito's fingertip touch. Louise then let out a delicate moan.

"Saito, it's still embarrassing..."

"On-only it's not embarrassing, it's cute."

"But, they're really small..."

"Not a bit small, and very cute. Even small is cute."

"Really?"

"Well, of course it's true... cute, little Louise is very cute."

Saito continued to say repeatedly in Louise's ear.

Listening to this, Louise was immersed in a feeling of happiness, and her whole body grew soft.

Thinking calmly, the current Saito was a little... or should say, very nauseating [12]. But Louise's head was already boiling... and already thought that it didn't matter - even if it was a little nauseating right now, she also liked it.

Then Saito push down Louise, and prepared to kiss her neck.

At that moment, Louise suddenly saw the scar on Saito's chest through the gap in his pajamas.

Familiar runes...

Louise frowned a little, then extended a finger to Saito's lips.

"Louise?"

"So, you became Tiffania's familiar?"

"Uh..."

That sentence suddenly made Saito's entire body stiff.

"That said, you and Tiffania concluded the familiar contract?"

"This..."

Seeing Saito speechless, then all of a sudden--

"Yes, yes I'm no good! I kissed Tiffa, I'm sorry!"

The sudden sound of sliding and he knelt on the bed, then bowed his head to Louise in apology repeatedly.

And the action of kneeling and bowing, were very skilled and beautiful.

"Oh, really, truly honest."

"Lo, Louise..."

Hearing that calm whisper from Louise scared Saito to his wit's end.

But Saito didn't confusedly try to shift the topic, in fact it was the correct decision.

In fact, Louise wasn't really angry.

When she first heard it from Tiffania, she really took a hit. After all, Saito was her familiar, and she originally thought that it was a unique and special link.

"But since there is danger in life, there is no other way."

After all, because she was in life-threatening danger, Tiffania could only chant the summoning spell. Due to a combination of factors, Saito was accidentally summoned since he was in the area. Since he was summoned, he had no choice but to complete the familiar contract... When Louise learned this, in fact, she had already understood that at the time they were truly helpless.

The present Louise was just simply being difficult for the fun of it.

"Speaking of Tiffania's chest, it's much larger than mine. Y-you'll go to her and be faithless, and you're also helpless."

"No, really, truly no!"

Saito desperately denied. Seeing this made Louise very happy, but couldn't help but feel bad for playing a trick.

"What the hell is that? Do you mean that compared to her cantaloupes, my, my tiny, little lemons are better?"

"Huh? Ah, eh er..."

Saito continued to repeatedly bow his head.

"If fact, you feel since Tiffania is like that, they're big enough to hold it better, right?"

"Hold it?"

Hearing this, Saito was confused.

"Siesta told me. That kind of scrubbing... I-I can't do it that way."

"Stupid, idiot... that kind of thing doesn't matter. I like your little chest more."

Hearing Saito's hurried defense, Louise suddenly smiled.

But then she immediately pouted again.

"Liar. When you were in the elven capital, you must have only stared at Tiffania's chest, and completely forgot about me?"

"Idiot, I'm getting mad." This time Saito earnestly said. "You, do you know how much I missed you...?"

"Wha-what, I-I'm not...Mm!"

Next, Louise could say no more.

Because Saito lifted her chin, and firmly kissed her.

"He, how did he do that... devious."

Heartwarming happiness enveloped her body, leaving Louise in a daze.

After the two people's lips slowly separated, Saito said with a truly serious face.

"For the time that I separated from you I was truly lonely. My heart was constantly thinking of you."

"Ah, I was also very lonely. I'm sorry, those words were just bad jokes."

Louise slightly lowered her head in apology, and then shyly looked up, staring up at Saito.

"Th-this..."

"Yes?"

"You have to be gentle with me."

Two people cuddled into bed at the same time and Saito tightly hugged Louise from behind.

Rubbing his cheeks on her peach blonde hair, as well as the warmth of her soft skin. Feeling the warmth of the one he loved, a feeling of satisfaction suddenly filled his chest.

Saito gently kissed Louise's neck.

He really wanted to undue the blouse buttons, but still stopped at the last moment...

In fact, he still wanted to feel Louise even more, to touch her skin more directly.

But Saito mobilized all of his own reason, and reluctantly tolerated it.

He promised Éléonore. Only after marriage could he cross that line.

And the expression of Louise as she slept in his arms, really was too innocent. It would make people hesitate to put a hand on her.

"Ah, Saito."

Louise opened her eyes and asked.

"Wha-what is it?"

"When we rushed into the elves' tower, it felt like Saito helped me. Wouldn't that be... the final familiar 'Lífþrasir's' power?"

"Well, probably..."

That would be the issue when I was on the sea dragon boat and suddenly felt intense pain. At that time, Louise was chanting a powerful 'Void' spell at the elven elder.

"But through that familiar power, aren't we consuming Saito's spirit power? If I constantly use powerful void, what will happen to Saito?"

"Well, if you consume too much, maybe I'll faint again..."

Saito didn't tell Louise the truth.

In fact, Saito was already perfectly aware, that the possible source that they were seizing at the time was neither spiritual nor physical power. It was, in fact, that kind of horrifying feeling, like his own life, like Saito's very existence was rudely snatched away.

"At that time, if we had continued, definitely..."

A cold chill couldn't help but run up his spine.

"But you don't need to rely on that power anymore."

Saito deliberately said that in a cheerful voice, in order to heal Louise's anxiety.

"Why?"

"Because peace with the elves has been reached. That way, you no longer need a powerful 'Void'."

"Also, that's right..."

It's said that when the four and four are gathered, it would reveal the Founder's void... 'Life'.

According to Louise, the power seemed sufficient to level a large city.

Just like a nuclear weapon, Saito thought. At the same time he thought about the nuclear submarine that was sunk in the 'Holy Land', and suddenly his mood became a bit gloomy.

But after all, that spell was for the decisive battle with the elves. Now they were already reconciled with the elves, and there was no threat from the 'Steel-Blooded Party', so there was naturally no reason to use the spell.

"Will just arriving in the 'Holy Land' truly solve all of our problems?"

"Who knows? But I think, at least everything will be revealed."

Louise responded.

Yes, just by arriving in the 'Holy Land'... everything would be revealed.

Including the Pope's real purpose, as well as what exactly had happened six thousand years ago...

Reason says that it would be that way, but there was an inexplicable trepidation in Saito's mind.

The Gandàlfr, Sasha, killed Brimir...

Derflinger said these words before, I don't know why they linger in my mind, but for a long time they couldn't leave.

And Derflinger has once again fallen into silence...

Tiffania, who was riding on the Romalian medical ship, carried a fruit basket in both hands, and arrived at the recovery room Fatima was staying in.

When she arrived at the recovery room door, she just saw Fouquet coming out.

"Matilda-nee^[13]."

"Oh, Tiffania."

Fouquet was carrying a large bandage in both hands, which should be to take care of that man, her mercenary partner, thought Tiffania.

"So, that person's injuries are already not an issue any more?"

"Well, I truly owe him, so I take care of him."

Fouquet said as she shrugged

"Waiting until after his injury heals, he said that he'd duel with that kid again. He's really sufficiently stupid."

"You won't stop him?"

"Why bother? He loves to duel and throw his life away, also it doesn't matter to me."

"But... isn't he your lover?"

Hearing Tiffania saying this, Fouquet tilted her head and put on a slightly musing appearance.

"Hey, who knows what this is? I only know that I just can't ignore that person."

"Really..."

Tiffania was puzzled.

"Speaking of you, does it not matter if you're by the kid's side?"

Saying this, Fouquet poked Tiffania's forehead with her fingertip.

Tiffania quietly shook her head.

"Ah, I don't mind."

In fact, I really want to be beside Saito.

But my heart feels that Saito should be together with Louise.

After Louise appeared, I saw Saito's reaction at that time and it was completely clear to me. No, actually, I knew everything from the very beginning.

The adventure in the country of the elves, it was just an empty dream.

However, although it was painful, it was also an incredibly warm feeling.

"Because I expressed my feelings to the person that I like."

And Saito also responded, when she desperately chanted the 'Summon' and placed in it all of her admiration and faith for Saito.

Only in this way did Tiffania sufficiently pay back her admiration for Saito...

"Matilda-nee, liking a person, really feels terrible."

Tiffania couldn't help the tears streaming down from her sea-blue eyes.

Fouquet tenderly hugged the crying Tiffania.

After saying goodbye to Fouquet, she discovered that Fatima was already awake as soon as she entered the recovery room.

"I brought fruit, and they were given to me by the soldiers on board."

"I can't accept your charity."

Fatima didn't move her line of sight.

But Tiffania was already sitting beside her bed.

In the silent recovery room, only the sound of fruit being cut echoed.

"I don't understand, who in the end should I hate?"

Fatima muttered this.

"..."

"I could hate the party, and Aishmail?"

She used her sea-blue eyes, as if trying to grab something, stared at Tiffania.

Tiffania revealed a steady smile, and Fatima tightly hugged Tiffania's back.

There was something like a gentle cocoon around the hateful flame in Fatima's heart.

To constantly hate someone and to hate something is actually quite painful. The fire of hatred continues to burn and sooner or later a person can burn themselves out...

However, Tiffania could have also been like her. If she had not met Matilda-

nee, or the orphans of Westwood Village at that time, maybe her heart would constantly hate the human race that had killed her mother. Like Aishmail or Joseph. And in the end she would be engulfed by the 'Void'.

"It doesn't matter, you don't have to hate anyone anymore."

Soon, Fatima burst into tears, along with the sound of sobbing.

The second day of the third week of the ninth month came, the twin moon hung high in the sky not too long ago. On that day, 'The Coalition Army for the Restoration of the Holy Lands' Air Force fleet arrived at the sea where 'The Dragon's Nest' was located.

Protruding from the water's surface were a great many rocks that were several dozen feet long, like tentacles made of strange rocks.

Several of them had already collapsed under the gun fire from the navy.

"Is the 'Holy Land' really in a place like this?"

Louise asked looking across the sea from the cabin.

"It should have been land here originally. A long time ago the land-form changed, thus it sank in the ocean."

The people going to get the magic device were the Pope and Julio, Gallia's Queen, Josette, Henrietta, the bearers of the Void Louise and Tiffania and the familiar of two people, Saito. And the representatives of the elves, Turuk and Bidashal together.

"Alas, the last time I came to the 'Demon's Gate' was several decades ago."

Having said that, Turuk made a bubble sphere large enough to accommodate everyone. Unlike the 'water breathing' magic that Luctiana applied to the body, entering the ocean wouldn't get your clothes wet. And the ball shone slightly, providing illumination in the water.

"Unfortunately, I can't see how the girls look in their swimsuits."

Turuk laughed twice.

"Lord Turuk, please restrain yourself a bit."

Bidashal said with a look of embarrassment.

Hearing that elves are long-lived, Saito originally thought of 'by the book' type characters like Bidashal and Ali. But this old elf gave people a feeling that he was easy to approach.

A little like Headmaster Osman... Saito thought.

After everyone entered the ocean, they saw colorful fish swimming around.

"So beautiful..." Louise stared with her eyes wide open.

"Yes, I didn't think such beautiful things still existed in this world."

Even Henrietta was enchanted. She was born in the royal family, so it's possible that she never entered the ocean while she grew up. Josette happily smiled when she saw that Julio was freely manipulating the fish with the power of Vindálfr. If Tabitha were to laugh, it would definitely be like that... Saito thought so.

Soon, everybody arrived at the base of the tentacle-like rock that extended from the seafloor to the surface.

Entering the large hole in the center, and passing through a cave that was like a cave of stalactites, they came to a place that had air.

It was covered with luminous moss, and was about the size of a theater.

After everyone came out of the water, the sound of a moving monster, about the size of a dragon, came from the depths of the cave.

"Saito, what is that sound?"

"Oh, it may be..."

When Saito was about to speak.

"Really, what's up? Recently it's been really noisy."

Swelling, swelling... A roar like an earthquake issued forth, and a huge 'water dragon' appeared before everybody, with a full length of fifteen feet.

"Mon-monster..."

The scared Henrietta quickly hid behind Saito.

"Oh, actually calling me a monster to my face... this girl is really rude, careful or I'll eat you up."

"The water dragon spoke!"

Louise was shocked.

"Of course it speaks, it is the 'Mother of the Sea' that lives here.

"Oh, you guys returned?"

Mother Sea overlooked everybody, as well as moved around to size everybody up.

"Bringing back so many barbarians and elves, what did you come to do this time?"

"Sorry, we don't intend to destroy your nest."

Saito said.

"But there's something that I want to let them see. Can you lead us to the place where the 'weapons' from another world accumulate?"

"What do you want to do in that place?"

"This matter is very important, related to the lives of our companions."

Seeing Saito's serious look, Mother Sea seemed to feel some kind of imminent crisis.

"I know, come with me."

Mother Sea's slowly swaying dorsal fin advanced to the depths of the cave.

In the depths, there was a cave full of seawater, with a diameter of about twenty feet. There were many large and small caves in this rock, which were like an ant's nest.

They traveled through the middle of the cave for a time, and finally arrived in another huge space.

Firearms, artillery, military vehicles, fighter jets, and so on... The rusty 'weapons' were piled up in broad space like a large theater.

"Just like the underground cemetery in Romalia." Julio said.

"Oh, this is the 'Holy Land' that the Founder once came to, this is not wrong.

Vittorio knelt in front of the 'weapons'. Perhaps seeing a place visited by Brimir, whom he worshiped, let him immerse in a moment of sentimentality...

But Saito had no time to be sentimental with him.

"So, where is the 'magic device'?"

"..."

Everyone there all watched Vittorio.

Seeing Vittorio slowly get up, he answered.

"There is absolutely no such thing as a 'magic device' to prevent the lifting of the mainland here."

This impactful statement didn't arouse much surprise in everyone.

The expressions of Julio, Josette, Turuk, and Bidashal all remained unchanged. Even Saito, Louise, and Henrietta... had long been vaguely aware of it.

Knowing that this casually fabricated lie, was camouflage.

"Can I ask what's going on?"

Just one person, Tiffania was completely confused.

"It means that his Holiness, the Pope... lied to us all."

Henrietta revealed a stern stare and directed it at Vittorio.

"I didn't tell you the truth and I apologize to you. But if we make the truth public, there would be no way for us to work together.

"Don't tell me this is the same reason that you conceal the fact that the 'wind stones' were going out of control?" Saito said.

"That's right. Next, let us see that we thirst for, the real purpose of the 'Holy Land'."

Vittorio stared intently at the other end of the mountain of accumulated 'weapons'.

"This spell originally required a huge amount of mental power. However, there is still a large 'portal' on the land where the Founder Brimir once walked,

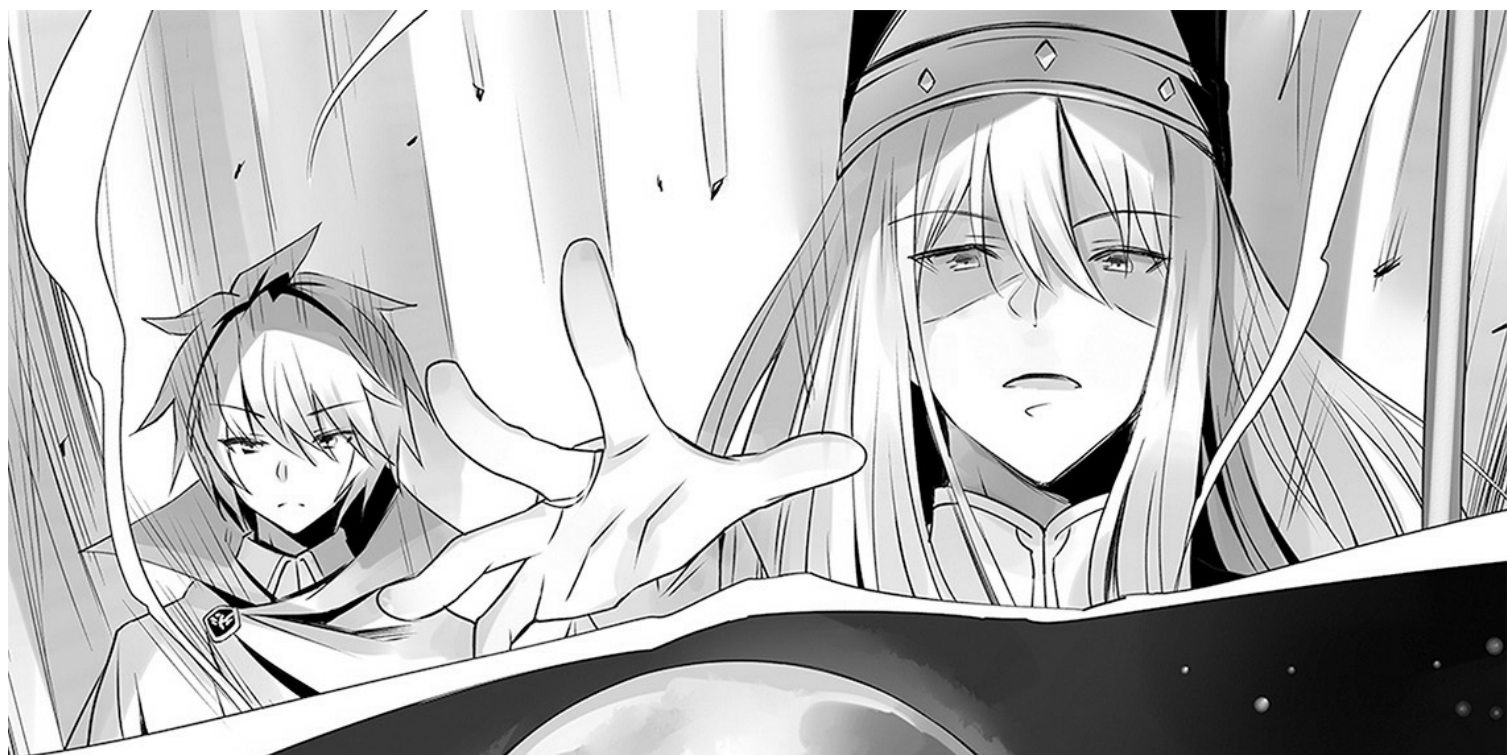
and I only need to open it."

Vittorio pointed his wand at the cave wall, and began chanting Void runes.

Yuer Ier Naushiz Gebo Shir Mari

"This spell is..."

Louise murmured in surprise.



This was the spell that Vittorio learned before in the cathedral in Romalia.
'World's Door'.

Opening the void to the gates of different worlds...

The chant was longer than it was then, which meant that this was the complete version of the spell.

Hagar Eoru Peos Ing Mansūr

The Pope aimed at the wall, and waved his wand.

Glittering, a glowing spot, about the size of a bean, appeared in the void.

They saw the light gradually expand...

When Louise saw it before, it was only about the size of a hand mirror.

What appeared before them now, was like a 'door' floating in the void.

"That's...!"

Seeing the things on the other side of the door, Saito couldn't help but be speechless.

In the eyes of everyone... Vittorio smiled steadily, and turned around.

"This is the Founder's desire, the 'promised land' that the 'Magi tribe' should return to.

And that was, the Earth that Saito was very familiar with.

Afterword

Replacing Yamaguchi Noboru-sensei's afterword.

To the fans of Zero no Tsukaima all over the world, we have kept you waiting.
(This is an international release) [\[14\]](#)

We present to you, "Zero no Tsukaima 21 - The Truth of Six Thousand Years". Since the book that was released on the 25th of February 2011, "Zero no Tsukaima 20 - The Holy Land of the Ancient Abyss", we have indeed waited for five years until this next book. What is the fate of Louise and the others of the 'Ostland' after invading the Elf Capital? Are the runes that have appeared on Saito's chest, the marks of being Tiffania's familiar? What is the true aim of the perishing Halkeginia, led by the Pope Vittorio? And then, what happened between the Founder Brimir and the first generations Gandálfr and Sasha six thousand years back? At last, the conclusions to the many riddles, magnificent stories, and so on, become clear.

As many of you already know, Yamaguchi-sensei is no longer in this world. This 21st volume is written, and the next, 22nd volume will be written according to Yamaguchi-sensei's plot, but I will again explain the circumstances on how it arrived to this.

In the afterword of the 20th volume, Yamaguchi-sensei narrated that "In another two volumes, I expect to finish.". Welcoming the story as well as the climax, being at a place where one could steadily see the conclusion, he wanted to start the countdown together with the long-time fans that had supported this for a long time. If it had gone to plan, the last volume could have been published a year later or so, and the initial topic back then was on how to

continue after this story was written.

When the 20th volume was released however, Yamaguchi-sensei was diagnosed with a critical illness. The situation was hopeless, he was initially informed that even an operation would not be able to save him. However, the result of his wonderful stamina, and him fighting strenuously against his illness, was that Yamaguchi-sensei forced back the illness, until he was able to be operated on.

After the surgery, Yamaguchi-sensei had to enter and leave the hospital for, in order to continue the treatment. According to Yamaguchi-sensei, the potent medication he had during hospitalization made his stamina decline, and thus, he had to wait for his body to recover during his temporary discharge, before being hospitalized again to consume the potent drugs again.

However, in the middle of harsh fighting against his illness,

"I want to write such a story."

"I want to write this kind of story."

"I am still not done with what I want to write, there's a lot of it left."

Yamaguchi-sensei was filled with the desire to write, not only 'Zero no Tsukaima' itself, but also many other stories he came up with, his creative spirit being huge.

However, in order to write novels, you need to have enormous amounts of energy and concentration, which the illness shaved of bit by bit.

And then, before we knew it,

"I really want to complete Zero. I want someone to help.", he said.

And from then on, he took into consideration an author that could expand on the plot, going through through authors with utmost effort, with the time that was left.

And then, regrettably, painfully, deplorably, during the 4th of April 2013, Yamaguchi-sensei, after entrusting the work to a splendid author, with the editorial department's assistance, departed this world.

From here on, we will not mention this author's name. You fans are not to

have pre-conceived notions, we think that you should enjoy the story of Zero that you have received.

The feeling when you read this is that, as you can see, Saito and Louise in this text remain the same as before. I did not feel anything awkward when reading the initial drafts, and it feels as though Yamaguchi-sensei himself wrote the story.

When I read the manuscript, I truly, unknowingly, had no uncomfortable feelings, as it felt just like Yamaguchi-sensei had written it himself. More importantly, the story of Zero no Tsukaima remains riveting, heart-thumping and comedic, as always.

This may be slightly imprudent to say, but if Yamaguchi-sensei were to take a look at it,

"This is very interesting! It's just like how I would have written it. Perhaps, if this was from me, it might not have been that interesting, aye?"

And, that roguish way of speaking does not differ.

And then, this long, continuing, "Zero no Tsukaima", has one book left. Yamaguchi-sensei's remaining aspirations, and our promise that we would implement them somehow. And to all of you fans, we are most obliged to all of the warm support that we have been continuously able to receive.

Heisei 28 (2016), January

The issuer, Taiji Misaka (ex-MF Bunko J editor-in-chief)

Translator's Notes and References

1. ↑ Ameya-Yokochō is an open-air market in the Taito Ward of Tokyo, Japan, located next to Ueno Station.
(<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ameya-Yokochō>)
2. ↑ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ammonoidea>
3. ↑ Keikaku means plan.
4. ↑ Big sister Matilda
5. ↑ This means "Knights of the Northern Flower Bed" in English, and this is what the actual kanji is. "Nordparterre" probably refers to "Une parterre de fleurs du nord"
6. ↑ The character sounds/pronunciation are the same but the written characters are wrong
7. ↑ I can't find the previous translation for this spell.
8. ↑ I still can't find the previous translation, but the kanji means "Wind of Ubiquity"
9. ↑ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catharsis>
10. ↑ Primitive
11. ↑ A reference to one of the prophecies, four and four referring to the four treasures, four rubies, four Void users, and four familiars.
12. ↑ In the sense of being overly flattering.
13. ↑ Big sister
14. ↑ Both Japanese and Taiwanese versions were released on the same day.